United Nations DP/2006/26

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
1 May 2006

Original: English

Annual session 2006
12 to 23 June 2006, Geneva
Item 14 of the provisional agenda
UNIFEM

Report of the Administrator on the *Organizational assessment: UNIFEM past, present and future**

I. Introduction

1. At its first regular session, 2006, the Executive Board adopted decision 2006/5 in which it requested the Administrator to report to the Executive Board at its annual session, 2006, his views on the *Organizational assessment: UNIFEM past, present and future* (A/60/62-E/2005/10), taking into account ongoing discussions regarding United Nations reform and the overall gender architecture.

II. Background

2. The *Organizational assessment: UNIFEM past, present and future* was commissioned by the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) at its 44th session in 2004 – and undertaken by an advisory panel – with the aim of "maximizing the Fund's ability to implement its mandate".

3. The report was introduced to Member States at the substantive session of ECOSOC of 2005. Through ECOSOC resolution 2005/54 Member States invited the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA to consider the report in 2006.

4. At the first regular session of the Executive Board, 2006, the Ambassador of Zambia to the United States, a member of the Advisory Panel to the Consultative Committee of United Nations Development Fund for Women, briefed the Executive Board on the scope, method and findings of the organizational assessment.

* The compilation of data required to present the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

06-33454 (E) 120506

According to the Advisory Panel, while the structure and UNIFEM programmes has evolved significantly in response to an improving political context in support of the empowerment of women and gender equality, the authority and status of UNIFEM has remained static, and the expansion of its core resource base was deemed inadequate. In response to the assessed problems, a set of time-bound recommendations on the future role and structure of UNIFEM was presented in the context of the broader United Nations system.

5. Furthermore, the 46th session of the Consultative Committee of UNIFEM, held on 14-15 February 2006, emphasized that UNIFEM was an essential component of the gender architecture and the ongoing United Nations reform effort and recommended that UNIFEM continue to be involved in all such processes, including the discussion on the mandate review and system-wide coherence, and welcomed the ongoing discussion of the organizational assessment within the United Nations system.

III. Preliminary response to the findings

6. The Administrator acknowledges the *Organizational assessment – UNIFEM past, present and future*, and is pleased to note the work already under way to implement many aspects of the report.

7. UNDP recognizes *the advantage of UNIFEM as a catalytic fund* and its comparative advantage in working in a matrix structure that allows it to be innovative and cost effective without being burdened by a heavy administrative apparatus.

8. UNDP acknowledges favourably *the ability of UNIFEM to build sustainable partnerships through memorandums of understanding with selected United Nations partners*: UNFPA, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Organization for Migration and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. UNIFEM also maintained strong partnerships with the United Nations regional economic commissions.

9. As an associated fund of UNDP, *UNIFEM has much to offer in the area of gender mainstreaming for development effectiveness within the United Nations system*. UNIFEM has spearheaded innovations that have had an impact on development effectiveness – for example, its work on MDG-based poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs); gender budgets; violence against women in crisis and post-conflict countries; and the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. As a 'laboratory' for the United Nations system on the 'how-to' of achieving gender equality, UNIFEM has the potential to make an enormous difference when linked to the capacity of UNDP to scale up innovation through its presence on the ground, its close partnership with governments, and the resident representative system. The experience and knowledge accumulated by UNIFEM will be most useful in strengthening country programmes from the gender perspective.

10. *UNIFEM should not be seen as a substitute for the mandated responsibility of UNDP or other organizations to mainstream gender, as has been the case in the past*. UNDP believes that all organizations must be responsible for mainstreaming gender within their respective mandates, just as the 'quick impact' initiatives should

not become a substitute for investing resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Resources must be forthcoming for this important work, as gender equality and the empowerment of women intersect across all dimensions of development. It cannot be the prerogative of any one organization, nor can it be relegated to the social sectors alone, as women make up half of the world's population and therefore do not belong to any specific category. As the torchbearer of the women's movement and an innovator for affecting gender equality outcomes, UNIFEM must no doubt have access to more resources, and in this regard it is hoped that Member States will be forthcoming in fulfilling the resources gap.

11. *In the context of United Nations reform, UNDP welcomes the responsibilities that UNIFEM is already fulfilling.* UNIFEM chairs the Gender Equality Task Force of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). In its role as chair of the task force, UNIFEM has conducted a review of UNDG members' gender polices, strategies and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming; developed training modules on mainstreaming gender equality into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, evaluation processes, and desk reviews of resident coordinators' annual reports for 2004; and recommended revisions to the UNDG guidelines for those annual reports. These are areas of vital importance which will no doubt give greater visibility and prominence to the gender mainstreaming agenda in the United Nations system. Together with the implementation of the United Nations system-wide gender mainstreaming strategy, they will have a far-reaching impact in bringing together all the United Nations organizations to work towards a common vision of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and in holding all United Nations entities accountable for delivering on the targets that have been established. This should also bring about greater clarity and coherence among all the organizations charged with the task of this transformation, on both the normative and operational sides.

12. *The United Nations High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence is working on the issue of simplification and harmonization in the broader context of United Nations reform, including the issue of the future of UNIFEM (which is a decision to be made by Member States).* As an ex-officio member of the panel, the Administrator remains personally committed to strengthening UNDP-UNIFEM partnerships, within the framework of a more gender-responsive UNDG, to work together in a unified, effective and coordinated United Nations system.

13. *The role of the Executive Director of UNIFEM.* The Executive Director of UNIFEM attends meetings in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. As special adviser to the Administrator on gender issues, the Executive Director of UNIFEM is a member of the UNDP Strategic Management Team and co-chair of the UNDP senior gender task force. She is also a member of the gender steering and implementation committee headed by the Administrator.

14. *Participation of UNIFEM in high-level meetings.* UNDP is open to UNIFEM participation as a part of the UNDP delegation in high-level meetings such as those of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, among others.

United Nations DP/2006/27

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
4 May 2006

Original: English

Annual session 2006
12 to 23 June 2006, Geneva
Item 15 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Annual report of the Administrator on evaluation in 2005*

Summary

The evaluation function in UNDP supports organizational learning, the effective management for results, and accountability. The year 2005 witnessed numerous collaborations throughout UNDP and with external partners in advancing the quality of the UNDP evaluation function in ways commensurate with increased recognition of its importance for organizational and development effectiveness. This report presents these activities and their potential effects in enhancing the quality of the evaluation function.

The report covers the period from March 2005 to February 2006, and describes the scope of coverage of evaluations of UNDP and its associated funds and programmes. It presents the major findings of evaluations, analyses the contribution of UNDP to selected development results, and highlights factors that affect success. The report outlines significant organizational issues and lessons on the relationship, and effect of UNDP resource mobilization strategies on the strength of its role as a neutral broker, and on the continuing challenges to complement its advocacy and policy dialogue work with greater 'downstream' relevance and effectiveness. The last part of the report presents a rolling agenda for the Evaluation Office programme of work for 2006-2007.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the report and its validation of the UNDP contribution to specific national development results and identification of key organizational lessons. The Board may wish to acknowledge the measures taken to improve the quality of the evaluation function, in particular the codification of an evaluation policy.

The Board may wish to recognize the progress in the conduct and use of evaluation during the year and commend UNDP for the considerable increase in the number of outcome evaluations conducted in comparison with 2004. In addition, the Board may wish to acknowledge that over the course of the year UNDP used evaluation as a basis for improving results-based management.

The Board may choose to approve the evaluation agenda for 2006-2007.

* The compilation of data required to present the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

06-34070 (E) 260506

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I. Performance of the evaluation function		1-39	3
	A. Introduction	1-4	3
	B. Planning and coverage of evaluation	5-18	3
	C. Quality of evaluations	19-23	6
	D. Use of evaluation	24-27	6
	E. Capacity development for evaluation	28-32	7
	F. Enhancing the evaluation function	33-35	8
	G. Resources	36-39	9
II. Results		40-63	9
	A. Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty	41-44	10
	B. Fostering democratic governance	45-49	11
	C. Energy and environment for sustainable development	50-52	12
	D. Crisis prevention and recovery	53-56	13
	E. Responding to HIV/AIDS	57-59	13
	F. Mainstreaming gender equality	60-63	14
III. Organizational lessons		64-71	15
	A. Doing the right things: relevance, positioning, comparative advantage, and sustainability	64-67	15
	B. Doing things right: efficiency and effectiveness	68-71	16
IV. Proposed Evaluation Office programme of work, 2006-2007		72-78	17
Annex			
	Evaluation statistics		19

I. Performance of the evaluation function

A. Introduction

1. Evaluation serves to provide valid, reliable and useful information about the intended and unintended effects of UNDP interventions to enhance human development. That information is used for organizational learning, decision-making and accountability. The evaluation function of UNDP has the following primary responsibilities: to ensure that coverage of the evaluation of UNDP interventions is optimal in supporting organizational learning and accountability; to establish and employ evaluation standards; to enhance the utility of evaluative knowledge; to enhance the institutional capacity for evaluation, taking knowledge-sharing and the development of communities of practice into account; and to ensure that evaluations are conducted in an effective and efficient manner, guided by the United Nations reform and partnership agreements.

2. The evaluation offices of UNDP and its associated funds and programmes plan and conduct evaluations of country programmes and projects, regional cooperation programmes, and thematic and strategic goals of the organization. They also enhance the quality of the evaluation function, practice and use. They report on compliance in carrying out mandatory evaluations and in the use of evaluative knowledge.

3. The units responsible for programmes (bureaux and country offices) plan and manage outcome and project evaluations at global, regional and country levels. These evaluations generate lessons primarily for programme improvement, and programme units are responsible for implementing and making systematic use of the evaluation recommendations. Evaluations are also used to measure accountability of UNDP performance. In addition, they constitute building blocks for strategic evaluations, thereby contributing to corporate accountability.

4. Chapter I of the report addresses the evaluation function. Chapter II outlines the results achieved and not achieved as evident from evaluations conducted in 2005. Chapter III identifies the key organizational lessons. And Chapter IV provides the proposed programme of work for the Evaluation Office for 2006-2007.

B. Planning and coverage of evaluation

Evaluations conducted by the UNDP Evaluation Office

5. In support of decision-making at the corporate level, the Evaluation Office is responsible for planning and conducting corporate evaluations that inform on effectiveness, relevance and strategic positioning, and suggest future directions for UNDP in supporting development. The planning process involves consultations with key stakeholders on priority areas for decision-making, new programme development or direction-setting in the organization.

6. During 2005, the Evaluation Office conducted seven independent evaluations. The evaluations conducted made use of an extensive information base drawn from existing project and outcome evaluations, pertinent case studies, and other complementary surveys.

Strategic and thematic evaluations

7. *Evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP.* Following a request from the Executive Board at its second regular session, 2002, this evaluation focused on UNDP performance and effectiveness in mainstreaming gender equality throughout the organization and its programmes.

8. *Evaluation of the role and contributions of UNDP in HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and Ethiopia.* As mandated by the Executive Board, the evaluation assesses the contribution of UNDP to the global challenge of reducing HIV/AIDS mortality, drawing on ten country case studies.

Programmatic evaluations

9. The Executive Board has requested that all global and regional programmes be evaluated before a new programme is prepared and approved. The evaluation of the Global Cooperation Framework was conducted in 2004; and during 2005 the Evaluation Office conducted the first evaluation of a regional programme, the *evaluation of the regional cooperation framework for the Arab States, 2001–2005*.

10. The Evaluation Office completed four Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) focused on the effectiveness of the country programme and the UNDP contribution to national priorities. The countries selected – *Honduras, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen* – were identified for their potential to generate lessons of strategic relevance to the organization. These include UNDP's performance in a non-core resource environment, or in transition and reform contexts.

Evaluations conducted by the associated funds and programmes

11. In accordance with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) mandatory requirements for mid-cycle and end-of-cycle evaluation, six centrally-managed evaluations of UNCDF projects were carried out in 2005, including five evaluations of local development programmes – four in least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa and one in an LDC in Asia – and an evaluation of UNCDF support to microfinance in West Africa. In addition, an independent evaluation of the UNDP microfinance portfolio, led by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest, assessed the role of UNCDF as policy advisor and technical advisor to UNDP for microfinance initiatives.

12. The evaluation unit of UNIFEM completed four thematic, multi-country evaluations during the year. In Africa they focused on conflict prevention and recovery, while in Asia they focused on income-generating initiatives. In the Pacific, the focus was on UNIFEM effectiveness in contributing to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

13. The evaluation unit of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme conducted six project evaluations in 2005, mostly addressing projects related to democratic governance. Four UNV evaluations covered African countries, one the Asia Pacific region and one Latin America.

Outcome and project evaluations managed by units responsible for programmes (decentralized evaluations)

14. UNDP has 142 country offices which plan and manage external evaluations[1]. During 2005, 271 outcome and project evaluations were completed, a four per cent increase in total number over the previous year (see annex table 3). As in 2004, 40 per cent of country offices did not conduct a single evaluation during the year. Regionally, coverage reflected the pattern of the previous reporting period, the highest proportion (77 per cent) of evaluations having been conducted in the Asia and the Pacific region, and the lowest in the Africa region, where 53 per cent of all offices conducted at least one evaluation.

15. Amongst the 13 countries with programme cycles ending in 2005 – and thus subject to compliance – the pattern of the previous year also remained unchanged: just over one-third (38 per cent) completed the requisite number of outcome evaluations, another one-third (31 per cent) complied partially, having conducted at least one but not the requisite number, and the remaining one-third (31 per cent) conducted no outcome evaluations (see annex table 2). Project evaluations are not mandatory under UNDP requirements, but they may be required by partnership protocols, such as in the case of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNCDF. There are no precise data on compliance with the evaluation requirements of partnership protocols, but more than 20 GEF project evaluations were managed by country offices during 2005.

16. The conduct of outcome evaluations has increased dramatically during this reporting period. Sixty-nine outcome evaluations were conducted in 2005, an 86 per cent increase over 2004, which was itself a 70 per cent increase over 2003. By contrast, the total number of project evaluations decreased by 20 per cent in comparison with the previous year. That pattern suggests that country offices are giving greater emphasis to the conduct of outcome evaluations, which is a positive development in support of results-based management.

17. The increase in outcome evaluations is consistent across MYFF goals and commensurate with resource allocation. The great majority of outcome evaluations conducted during this reporting period have focused on MYFF goals 1 and 2, *achieving the MDGS and reducing human poverty* and *fostering democratic governance*, which are the top two in terms resource allocation. The evaluation findings in these areas are highlighted in Chapter II of the present report. The exception is Goal 4, *crisis prevention and recovery*, which decreased by 8 per cent compared to last year (see annex figure 1 and table 5). This is an area of growing engagement for UNDP, and it is important to understand what works and why.

18. The conduct of outcome evaluations is variable across and within regions. The highest proportion of outcome evaluations across regions is to be found in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 40 per cent and 29 per cent of country offices conducting at least one outcome evaluation, respectively. The Africa region conducted the lowest with only 16 per cent, the Arab States 28 per cent and Asia and the Pacific 24 per cent (see annex figure 2 and table 6). However, although in comparing *across* regions Africa comes out lowest, 25 per cent of all evaluations (including projects) conducted *within* the region were at the outcome level. This compares with only

[1] Outcome evaluations are planned at the beginning of the country programme cycle, and are chosen to address priority areas and timed to feed programme improvement. Project evaluations are typically planned in accordance with partnership protocols, normally to assess mid- or end-term performance and impact.

21 per cent and 17 per cent respectively in the Arab States and in Asia and the Pacific. Africa seems to be more focused on outcomes than Asia and the Pacific or the Arab States. These variations may be explained by several factors related to sources of programme funding, budget allocation for evaluation, institutional arrangements and technical capacity.

C. Quality of evaluations

19. Evaluation informs the formulation and revision of policies, strategies and programmes, as well as for decision-making. It must therefore be objective, impartial, and valid.

20. *Quality of evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office*. The peer review of the UNDP evaluation function conducted under the auspices of the DAC Network on Evaluation concluded that the Evaluation Office produces evaluations that are independent, credible and useful. However, their potential for helping to strengthen accountability and performance assessment could be better exploited by the organization. The review highlighted a need for greater transparency in the benchmarks developed for judging effectiveness and impact. Further, it noted the importance of enhancing national ownership of evaluations as key to increasing their usefulness and impact for development.

21. *Quality of decentralized evaluations*. The evaluations produced by country offices, besides being used for programmatic improvement, are building-blocks for strategic, global, regional and country programme evaluations. The quality and utility of the evaluations commissioned by country offices is, however, uneven. Some present rigorous and credible assessments of UNDP performance. Others, while providing interesting strategic analysis, are lacking in terms of performance assessment and evaluative evidence.

22. Part of the problem comes from a lack of clarity in programme objectives and poorly defined performance indicators. In addition, it is difficult to attribute outcomes with activities or outputs that involve UNDP alone. Outcome evaluations are a partnership proposition by their nature and require a deep engagement with the major international and national stakeholders in a given country. However, this approach is not yet an established practice.

23. *Evaluation Office's actions to enhance quality*. The Evaluation Office is taking a number of actions to assure the quality of centrally managed and decentralized evaluations. Quality standards are being developed for each stage of the evaluation process, including the planning, conduct and use of evaluation. These will provide objective, transparent benchmarks against which quality can be checked, scored and ensured at each stage of the process. They will provide a horizon against which the Evaluation Office and the country office can identify and address capacity gaps and other challenges in order to meet the expected quality. The effectiveness of such efforts will be highly dependent on the existence of evaluation expertise at the country level.

D. Use of evaluation

24. Public attention on effective oversight within the United Nations system underscores the importance of effective use and follow-up in respect of evaluations. The Evaluation Office has sought to achieve this by structuring consultations with key internal and external stakeholders on the focus, timing and follow-up to evaluations in the context of the evaluation agenda. ADRs are now timed to match the country programme cycle. All evaluations, moreover, will be accompanied by a

management response. To ensure full corporate ownership of management responses and provide for more effective follow-up and implementation, senior management will review all responses to evaluations requested by the Executive Board prior to their submission. This will serve to brief other units on the nature of the issues and provide them with an opportunity to 'own' the proposed response and support its implementation as appropriate.

25. The evidence of use of evaluations has been drawn from programme units. Over the past year, programme evaluations have had an impact on restructuring existing strategies and designing new ones. The evaluation of the regional cooperation framework for the Arab States has been used to inform the new regional programme. In Ukraine and Turkey, UNDP has used conclusions from the ADRs to inform new country programme documents. In Jamaica, following the evaluation recommendation to rethink the UNDP role in middle-income countries, the country office has undertaken a consultative process for its strategic repositioning.

26. The response to strategic and thematic evaluations has been similarly positive. The evaluation of gender mainstreaming, for example, led to revision of the UNDP gender action plan for 2006-2007. Recommendations of the UNIFEM gender responsive budget programme evaluation have been taken into account in designing the logical framework of the second phase of the programme, while findings of the Peace and Security Programme evaluation have been used in identifying future strategic directions for UNIFEM in this area. Following up on a recommendation of the UNDP microfinance portfolio review, a new UNDP microfinance policy has been issued, making UNCDF the gatekeeper and quality assurer of UNDP microfinance programming. As of 2006, the rate of follow-up on agreed evaluation recommendations will be included as an indicator of organizational effectiveness in the UNCDF balanced scorecard.

27. To support this improved use within the organization, the Evaluation Office is finalizing a new electronic recommendation and follow-up tracking system for management responses. While the system will be managed by the Evaluation Office, programme units will be responsible for updating the information and ensuring that the management responses are implemented. To ensure oversight, the Evaluation Office will prepare periodic implementation status reports for UNDP senior management and the Executive Board.

E. Capacity development for evaluation

28. *Knowledge sharing and staff learning*. In enhancing the practice of evaluation in the institution, networking, knowledge-sharing and exchange are critical. The Evaluation Network (EvalNet) is the main platform for exchange among country offices. In 2005 there was a 31 per cent increase in membership, up to 855 members worldwide. Network members acknowledge the effectiveness of this community of practice in sharing evaluation knowledge and enhancing capacity. Moreover, an online roster of evaluation experts has been developed and is available for consultation by all UNDP offices.

29. *Development of communities of practice and learning groups among country offices*. Regional workshops conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2004 and 2005 resulted in an intensive exchange of knowledge and experience among country offices. For example, the Panama country office shared the knowledge and experience of its monitoring and evaluation unit with the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. In Africa, the HIV/AIDS unit from Kenya participated in a monitoring and evaluation reference and publication group that was instrumental in fostering

capacity-building in monitoring and evaluation for local partners in Somalia. In Eastern Europe, the HIV/AIDS focal point from Belarus was invited to Latvia to participate in the design of an outcome evaluation.

30. *Advisory and technical services and training.* The Evaluation Office has provided advisory and technical services to country offices and regional bureaux. In 2005, these services included assistance to country offices in supporting national monitoring and evaluation frameworks and to regional bureaux for outcome evaluation management. Evaluation Office staff members participated as resource persons in training sessions organized by the UNDP Learning Resource Centre for junior and national professional officers, deputy resident representatives and resident representatives.

31. *External partnerships for knowledge sharing.* In addressing development evaluation challenges in 2005, the Evaluation Office has continued to build on its professional partnerships. Examples include dialogue with the independent evaluation group of the World Bank on approaches and methodologies, and with the evaluation unit of the European Commission. In the Asia and the Pacific region, for the second year running, the Evaluation Office has supported the Tokyo Workshop on the evaluation of official development assistance hosted by the Government of Japan for government officials from more than twenty-five Asian countries. The Evaluation Office has also sponsored and participated in the annual conference of the Malaysian Evaluation Society. UNIFEM has been working in partnership with the African Evaluation Association to strengthen information management on gender- and rights-based monitoring and evaluation, including a database of gender and development evaluators, resource materials, and an electronic networking forum.

32. *Partner country evaluation capacity development.* Lessons from five regional workshops conducted by the Evaluation Office revealed that the relevance and utility of evaluation is increased when programme countries become real partners in the planning, conduct and use of evaluation. The Evaluation Office is now, under the aegis of UNEG, partnering with other United Nations organizations and the Government of South Africa in a country level evaluation. This experience will be used as an opportunity for mutual capacity enhancement as well as for developing lessons for alternative approaches to enhancing capacity development and national ownership of evaluations.

F. Enhancing the evaluation function

33. *Codification of an evaluation policy.* During 2005, the Evaluation Office worked to codify the evaluation function so as to define the framework and improve the efficiency of the system, as well as the quality and utility of the products. Development of the policy was consultative, and included input from across the organization through an informal session with Executive Board members and the DAC peer review panel. The policy defined norms, principles, and key concepts, as well as roles and responsibilities for the conduct and use of evaluation throughout the organization, and will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its annual session in June 2006.

34. *Peer review of the Evaluation Office by the DAC network on evaluation.* The evaluation function was the subject of a systematic peer review by the DAC network on evaluation. That external review provided information on the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function. The review, together with a

response from the Administrator, was presented at an informal meeting of the Executive Board, and the results have been used to finalize the draft policy.

35. *Collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).* The active involvement of the Evaluation Office in UNEG responds to the United Nations reform agenda of increased harmonization and efficiency, reduced transaction costs and the building of national ownership in conducting and leading evaluations. Among the main activities of the Evaluation Office have been: serving as Chair of UNEG; hosting and managing the secretariat; participating in task forces and groups designed to enhance the quality of the evaluation function through quality assessment, increase professionalism and capacity of evaluators by developing a competency profile for specialists and a training and learning curriculum, and explore the linkages between evaluation and results-based management.

C. Resources

36. *Evaluation Office capacity.* The Evaluation Office has 15 professional and three general service posts. The budget allocated from core resources for 2005 was $2,500,000, and the budget delivery rate was 96 per cent.

37. *Capacity of the associated funds and programmes.* The UNIFEM evaluation unit has one part-time professional post, and UNCDF has one full-time professional post – reduced in 2005 from four posts (three professional and one general service). The UNV unit has four staff: three professionals and one general service. During 2005, all evaluation units collaborated closely, particularly in developing the draft evaluation policy.

38. *Capacity of country offices and regional bureaux.* There are diverse institutional arrangements for staffing and budgeting at the country level. Only 12 of the 142 country offices have a full-time, dedicated monitoring and evaluation professional, either specialist or advisor; while at least 122 have a focal point. With few exceptions, monitoring and evaluation focal points are not evaluation specialists, but administrators or managers, with multiple responsibilities. Monitoring and evaluation specialists in country offices have varying responsibilities depending on office priorities. These include communication with headquarters on evaluation-related matters; providing in-house assistance and training on programme design, monitoring and evaluation; and serving as evaluation task managers.

39. All regional bureaux have evaluation focal points to support evaluation planning and liaise with the country offices and with the Evaluation Office. One regional centre (Europe and the CIS) has a monitoring and evaluation specialist position, which was established with the support of the Evaluation Office. The specialist is responsible for building the capacity of country offices to monitor and evaluate programmes, and advising on the conduct of decentralized evaluations.

II. Results

40. This chapter presents evidence from evaluations completed during 2005, organized according to the corporate goals. Evidence is also provided on gender mainstreaming as one of the drivers of development effectiveness. The analysis draws upon four ADRs and three strategic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, on 32 outcome evaluations commissioned by Country Offices and conducted

by independent consultants, and on the evaluations conducted by evaluation units of associated funds and programmes.

A. Achieving the MDGS and reducing human poverty

Increasing national capacity for poverty monitoring and pro-poor policymaking

41. Evaluations analysed for this report reveal that UNDP initiatives are most relevant and valued when they focus on strengthening the technical capacity of public institutions to design, implement and monitor public policies effectively. In Armenia, UNDP has been key to the endorsement of the MDGs as national development priorities by the highest levels of Government, and in the establishment of a vulnerability and human poverty indicators tracking system. Consequently, the Ministry of Economy and European Integration launched and published the first MDG baseline report for the country, which is used to track progress in Government policies and programmes. Similarly, in Mongolia, UNDP was instrumental in the establishment of a poverty research group in the Ministry of Finance, which strengthened the capacity for policy formulation and monitoring in the area of poverty reduction.

42. Evaluations suggest that UNDP initiatives in this area are more likely to generate significant outcomes when technical and financial assistance is complemented by advocacy for the MDGs and human development. In Ukraine, for example, budget allocation for local governments is influenced by the tracking of a human development index, locally defined after the production and launch of national human reports in 2001 and 2003. The evaluation of the regional cooperation framework (RCF) for the Arab States, for example, shows that UNDP has been successful in raising the debate on a number of sensitive political issues in a region where external involvement in policymaking has been controversial and frequently rejected. The RCF served to analyse human development trends through the Arab Human Development Report and identify some of the constraints to development effectiveness in the region. Similarly, in Yemen, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) progress report, prepared with UNDP support, has been a notable contribution for the preparation of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which itself includes an action programme for achieving the MDGs and an analysis of costs.

Piloting and mainstreaming local development initiatives

43. The analysis across the evaluations indicates that the piloting of local development experiences stands out as a key dimension of UNDP efforts in transforming macro poverty reduction approaches and strategies into actual national and local alternative development paths. The results in this area appear to be mixed. In Ukraine, pilots were sometimes found to be too small to test their viability or to streamline or replicate them as effective solutions to meet the longer-term livelihood challenges of people in the targeted areas. In Belarus, UNDP-supported small and medium-sized enterprises were found to add little value to the local or national economy. Evaluation findings suggest that effective risk management should be a primary concern in areas where external factors strongly influence success or failure, such as in the case of private sector development.

44. Overall, the evaluations of UNCDF local development programmes indicated a high degree of relevance in the type of infrastructure and services delivered through local governments, such as schools, health centres, feeder roads, water and sanitation, and food security-related investments. The relevance of the UNCDF

microfinance portfolio is also demonstrated by evaluation, although results appear to have been mixed. The final evaluation of the UNCDF guichet microfinance programme in West Africa found that the programme had fallen slightly short of its outreach and institutional strengthening targets. A more positive trend, although still mixed, has been revealed by the evaluation of the UNCDF/UNDP MicroStart programme; it was considered a successful microfinance model in the evaluation of the UNDP microfinance portfolio, with good performance of several of the microfinance institutions supported, such as in Yemen. The UNCDF microfinance unit and the technical expertise of its staff were cited in evaluation as a comparative advantage of UNDP programming. Notwithstanding these results, evaluations have identified the broader challenges of inadequate monitoring systems, insufficient documentation of lessons from pilots, and the lack of consistent engagement with national government stakeholders throughout the pilot as constraining the potential for the greater policy impact, replication and sustainability of pilots.

B. Fostering democratic governance

Increasing the efficiency and transparency of state institutions and electoral processes

45. Increasing the efficiency of state institutions and the transparency of public sector management continues to be revealed by evaluations as relevant and challenging areas of engagement for UNDP. In Honduras, for example, through the business centre approach, UNDP has been managing up to 7 per cent of public investment funds with the aim of enhancing efficiency and transparency in the management of large bidding and procurement processes. UNDP has gained the trust of decision makers and, therefore, space for advocacy. UNDP advocacy with the Ministry of Defence for increasing accountability of military expenditure to civil authorities has resulted in an internal audit of the military pension fund. While recognizing these achievements, the evaluation in Honduras warns of the risk that the business centre could become an efficient service provider that does not effectively contribute to national capacity development and institutional strengthening. The evaluation suggests developing a capacity-building plan so as to ensure that in the procurement management processes UNDP transfers skills and, to the extent possible, aligns with national procedures, while having a clear exit strategy.

46. Evaluations reveal UNDP contributions to the efficiency and transparency of electoral processes. In Yemen, the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda has become a stronger organization, setting up offices in the governorates. Electoral assistance in 2003 proved successful in increasing voter registration, getting women out to vote, and preventing voter-related violence.

Raising awareness on human rights

47. UNDP utilizes its comparative advantage of neutrality in defending human rights, supporting political reform and advocating policies that promote human development. The ADR in Yemen revealed the relevance of UNDP advocacy efforts, highlighting the fact that the Ministry for Human Rights was producing an annual report on the human rights situation in the country was also been able to take punitive measures on major human rights violations. In Ukraine, government capacity to monitor and act on human rights abuses was strengthened by: improving the human rights monitoring capabilities of the Ombudsman's Office; involving the public in human rights monitoring; improving access to information; and harmonizing the Government's human rights monitoring approach with

United Nations reporting processes. In South Asia, the UNIFEM programme on preventing trafficking in women and children has contributed to raising community awareness of issues related to domestic and civil violence against women and children, and of the economic exploitation of indigenous people.

Supporting decentralization processes and enhancing citizens' participation

48. Evaluations reveal that the comparative advantage of UNDP as a neutral broker can be effective in rearticulating state-society relations. This takes place mainly in the framework of decentralization processes, through the development and consolidation of participatory mechanisms and skills. In Bhutan, Benin, Honduras and Mali, evaluations have pointed to the significant role played by UNDP and UNCDF in advancing the policy debate and operationalizing decentralization reforms. The UNDP civil society programme in Guatemala has been evaluated as successful in contributing to the incorporation of citizen participation in community- and municipal-level decision-making. Moreover, civil society organizations supported by UNDP over the past five years are now regularly monitoring state budget execution, with a particular focus on the relation between military expenditure and social investment.

Increasing UNDP performance in democratic governance

49. In spite of the positive contribution to democratic governance, a recurrent finding of the evaluations reviewed was that the impact of UNDP performance could be increased by optimizing synergies through clearer strategic and operational linkages among regional, national and local levels and across thematic areas of intervention. Moreover, as the Ukraine ADR reveals, UNDP initiatives at the country level could benefit from focusing on dimensions of governance that are not typical areas of engagement for UNDP, such as media freedom, the government role in various spheres of economic activity, and institutional incentives.

C. Energy and environment for sustainable development

50. Energy and environment outcome evaluations, as well as evaluations of GEF-funded projects, point to the comparative advantage of UNDP in mainstreaming energy and the environment into policy development and governance. Yet there are challenges in the mainstreaming process and in translating the policy dialogue into implementation and capacity at the local level.

51. The evaluation of the environmental management programme of Indonesia notes mixed progress in each sub-sector of the programme. Environmental degradation continues at an alarming rate. Overall environmental management capacity to respond to these issues has deteriorated, or at best remained stable. The evaluation recommends going beyond efforts to enhance the policy and legal framework in all ministries to enhancing capacity at the provincial and district levels, where the need is greatest. The evaluation recommends that the implementing agency (the environmental unit) should adopt a more programmatic approach – a key element of which would be the development and implementation of a strategic plan. This should include an evaluation and monitoring framework with schedules and processes for undertaking baseline assessments and establishing outcome indicators for each priority sub-sector.

52. The national environmental action programme of Turkmenistan serves as an example where the political leadership of a country refused to accept recommendations requiring structural change in the management of the economy in general, and of agricultural irrigation in particular. The evaluation highlights the fact

that the design of the environmental management programme in the country was too 'ambitious' to contribute to major policy and legal reforms pertaining to environmental issues.

D. Crisis prevention and recovery

53. The increased concern of the international community over crisis prevention and recovery has resulted in the growing engagement of UNDP in post-conflict rehabilitation. This is a field in which the comparative advantage of UNDP as a neutral broker and a reliable partner of the Government and civil society is most important. The polarization of State-society relations that frequently characterizes post-conflict situations entails the latent risk of reopening violent confrontations. In Guatemala, for example, evaluation revealed that UNDP effectiveness in empowering civil society has challenged its positioning as a neutral broker. The ADR in Ukraine revealed important progress in inter-ethnic understanding and social harmony, through UNDP-supported dialogue processes and community based socio-economic activities. However, it also highlighted the need to address emerging threats to human security.

54. Other contributions to conflict resolution are found in Eastern and Central Africa. Examples include the UNIFEM-supported community dialogues between women from Northern and Southern Sudan, and the formation of a women's clan in Somalia, to ensure that women's voice would be heard during the peace talks. Support to NGOs in Rwanda has built women's capacities to play an effective role in the Gacaca, the traditional social justice system. At the regional level, UNIFEM supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in developing and implementing a policy on women, conflict resolution and peace building.

55. The evaluation found that the Afghanistan 'New Beginnings' programme had no overall reintegration vision or strategy. Unless immediate remedial action is taken, there is a possibility that any organizational capacity built by the programme could be lost. The most evident shortcoming of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration component of the programme has been the absence of a strategy for institutional development of organizations of Afghan civil society.

56. In mine action, the national programme launched by Yemen has achieved some success in awareness creation: about 20 per cent of the critically mined areas have been cleared thus far. Indeed, the mine action programme in Yemen is showing a depth of maturity that is comparable to the best mine action programmes in the world. Since the establishment of the Yemeni Executive Mine Action Centre in 1999, the programme's achievements reveal focus and clarity of purpose. Under capable management, the centre has established impressive mine risk education and victim assistance programmes that could serve as examples for post-conflict situations. In addition, there is a promising mine detection programme using dogs. The national mine action standards have been translated into Arabic, and a comprehensive set of standard operating procedures has been produced, including for quality assurance and monitoring.

E. Responding to HIV/AIDS

57. In the area of HIV/AIDS, UNDP has provided assistance to programme countries through a variety of services. One key conclusion of the evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and Ethiopia is that UNDP should accord greater urgency and prominence to HIV/AIDS in its work at the country level, with clearly integrated country-level strategies and activities and

increasingly strategic use of limited UNDP resources. From 2003-2004, the last year of the review period, the findings show that the share of UNDP spending for HIV/AIDS increased in only four countries, and declined in six. Nevertheless, UNDP appears to have been effective in moving the HIV/AIDS paradigm from a biomedical to a developmental perspective. That shift was part of a global change, but UNDP was considered by many to have been instrumental in successfully advocating for this paradigm shift within countries. However, little progress has been made in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into all aspects of poverty reduction strategies. There seems to be a 'delivery gap' in translating governance contributions into actions that mitigate and eventually reduce the impact and incidence of the pandemic.

58. Evaluations of the UNDP response to HIV/AIDS in Russia and Viet Nam outline a somewhat more positive scenario. They conclude that through programmatic interventions and 'soft' assistance, such as policy dialogue, advocacy, and coordination, there have been major improvements in the capacity of the authorities to respond to the challenge of confronting the epidemic.

59. Finally, the Indian railways initiative of UNIFEM has reached 30,000 employees of the railway system, 120,000 community members, and 793 people living with HIV/AIDS. It has provided a model for public sector intervention on HIV/AIDS integrating prevention, care, and support services, with progress made in terms of increased awareness and gender sensitivity; increased numbers of people accessing services; and improved working conditions. Following a study tour by a delegation of the Chinese Railways to the project in Andhra Pradesh, China was considering replicating the project for its own railway system.

F. Mainstreaming gender equality

60. Over the past decade, a series of policies on gender mainstreaming has been formulated. Positive measures in support of gender mainstreaming included the continuation of a gender unit at headquarters; the appointment of regional gender advisers; the establishment of a system of gender focal points; and the establishment of trust funds. However, the evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP revealed that these measures were not accompanied by strategies, targets and time frames, or by sufficient operational measures and resources to facilitate and track implementation. UNDP developed a corporate gender strategy and action plan only recently.

61. Findings from 14 country studies revealed uneven practice. In UNDP country offices, approaches have varied considerably, ranging from women-focused projects that, for example, provide credit to women or promote their participation, to incorporating gender analysis and gender concerns in programmes, such as those related to the legal system. In general, the tendency has been to support women-focused activities that complement ongoing work rather than engaging in analyses that deepen UNDP understanding of gender issues and stimulate new approaches. There have been a number of commendable efforts to mainstream gender in the five UNDP thematic areas and in specific regional and country programmes. But these tend to be isolated successes, depending on individual interest and efforts rather than on a systematic approach.

62. The evaluation concludes that gender mainstreaming has not been visible and explicit. Implementation has suffered from confusion about what gender mainstreaming means and how to apply the approach. Inadequacies in leadership, commitment and financial resources, among other issues, have limited the ability to

fully realize the integration of gender equality considerations at all levels of the organization and in all activities.

63. One factor contributing to this lack of success is that the broader corporate priority to restructure the organization – a process begun in 2000 – overshadowed official statements from top management that gender mainstreaming remained a core commitment. For instance, the Global Gender Programme for 2000-2004 received only one-fifth of its former budget. The gender unit was situated under the poverty thematic area in the Bureau of Development Policy (BDP). But since poverty is only one of the five UNDP thematic areas of work, the gender unit could not have oversight of all the thematic areas. As of 2004, the gender unit reports directly to the Director of BDP. Nevertheless, it still lacks sufficient funding and staffing, and has no UNDP-wide authority.

III. Organizational lessons

A. Doing the right things: relevance, positioning, comparative advantage and sustainability

64. The comparative advantage of UNDP lies in its brokering role in starting up or catalyzing development processes, facilitating dialogue as a neutral agent, and contributing to the momentum for policy change. The ADRs in Honduras, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen; the evaluation of the Regional Cooperation Framework for the Arab States; and the strategic evaluations on gender and HIV/AIDS; all highlight UNDP effectiveness in placing human development and the MDGs on the political agenda of partner countries, even in contexts where external involvement can be controversial.

65. Lessons from several countries indicated that to be influential in sensitive areas, UNDP must earn trust and respect across the spectrum of national stakeholders. In Syria, the evaluation found that in the face of a nascent civil society and a cautious official attitude, UNDP did not optimally utilize an opportunity to promote this sector through partnerships with emerging NGOs. In other contexts where relationships between the State and society are highly polarized – such as in post conflict environments – UNDP effectiveness in empowering civil society through technical and financial support may challenge its position as a trustworthy Government partner. Evaluations have highlighted that this must be identified and constantly factored in through risk management, to avoid the latent risk of the loss of credibility that would limit possibilities for policy advocacy and partnership for human development.

66. These risks should be considered within the wider framework of UNDP resource mobilization strategies and the financial sustainability of operations units, particularly in non-core environments, where Governments are key financial partners. The evaluations highlighted two cases that provided interesting lessons that may be relevant in other contexts. The first case is that of Honduras, where strong UNDP engagement in providing administrative services to the Government for public finance management led to several positive effects. UNDP efficiency and transparency in administration provided added value to Government fundraising and management strategies. UNDP gained the trust of decision-makers, opening the way for advocacy and political engagement nationwide. The cost recovery for these services has supported the financial sustainability of the country office, allowing for an increase in the number of staff and, potentially, a wider scope for its

interventions. However, the lack of a clear exit strategy and of a systematic approach to national capacity development raises the question of whether a sustained increase in delivery might become an objective per se, which could shift the focus from the development agenda of the country or reduce programme quality. In the second case, Ukraine, the UNDP resource mobilization strategy has focused mainly on cost-sharing with bilateral donors, resulting in a dramatic increase in programme expenditure. Nevertheless, the evaluation reveals that efforts to mobilize funds are not necessarily the best way to increase the relevance, efficacy or impact of the UNDP portfolio.

67. Conflict of interest and confusion of roles may arise where UNDP seeks to combine the roles of policy coordinator, donor, rights advocate, neutral broker and project implementer. In particular, areas where UNDP has a comparative advantage but is unlikely to mobilize external resources – such as donor coordination, neutral broker activities and advocacy for human rights – can be crowded out by activities for which cost-sharing assistance is more readily available and government consent easier to secure. In short, the relationship between resource mobilization, budget delivery and the relevance, scope and effectiveness of interventions for development change should always be carefully analysed.

B. Doing things right: efficiency and effectiveness

68. While there have been significant achievements in fostering debate on key developmental issues and contributing to momentum for policy change, UNDP's performance in the implementation of programmes and the piloting of concrete practical experiences has been mixed.

69. While recognizing the difficulty of establishing effective programmatic or policy micro-macro linkages, there are strong indications that UNDP is more effective when its comparative advantages in resource and knowledge mobilization and policy dialogue are complemented by better programme coordination and monitoring. These findings confirm that UNDP needs to move from a mainly project-based approach towards a modus operandi that addresses broad development issues at the local, national or regional level. Visions and strategies that link these different levels, as well as management capacity for effective coordination that optimizes potential synergies, are key factors for success.

70. The potential for enhancing strategic management and focus through the results-based management system of UNDP is still not being fully exploited. Discrepancies are observed between what is formally stated in programme documents and what is actually being done. Several UNDP country-level evaluations have shown that the way in which strategic results are formulated in programme documents do not always constitute useful planning tools for setting priorities, defining programmes strategically, or cultivating partnerships with the clear objective of contributing to the delivery of agreed results. However, these evaluations – notably Ukraine – also revealed that responsiveness to Government and adaptability to change are critical for achieving results.

71. These findings suggest that staff capacity for clear and focused programming needs to be developed further, while monitoring systems that adopt the country programme as their unit of analysis need to be established, going beyond individual project- and sector-focused programmes. Flexible management procedures that allow for strategic changes during implementation so as to optimize opportunities, while safeguarding transparency and accountability, are other key factors for greater impact. In summary, evaluations point to several opportunities to maximise UNDP

effectiveness by reinforcing results-orientated approach, enhancing management capacity and improving planning, monitoring and evaluation.

IV. Proposed Evaluation Office programme of work, 2006-2007

72. The Evaluation Office has prepared a rolling two-year programme of work on strategic and programmatic evaluations. The programme includes work on quality assurance of the evaluation function and practice.

73. The proposal for strategic evaluations is based on the following criteria: corporate priorities evidenced from investment patterns; outcomes reported; and policy statements of the Administrator and the Associate Administrator; emerging organizational practices and development priorities; issues emerging from past evaluations; programme areas not covered by recent evaluations; and consultations at the working level with headquarters units. The proposal for programmatic evaluations is based on evaluations mandated by the Executive Board and strategic country coverage through ADRs.

74. The UNDP biennium budget allocated a total of $5.0 million to the Evaluation Office for 2006-2007. Based on the discussion of the evaluation policy among senior management, and with a view to expanding the coverage of evaluation work, an additional $1.5 million in programme funding was approved for the Evaluation Office for 2006. Total resources from the UNDP core budget for programming for 2006-2007 thus amount to $6.5 million. Additional funding, from partnership agreements – with the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – amounts to $1.2 million for 2006.

75. The *ongoing* programme of work is as follows:

(a) Strategic evaluations:

(i) Development effectiveness report on national ownership;

(ii) Evaluation of the UNDP role and contribution in post-conflict countries;

(iii) Assessment of national human development reports;

(iv) Joint evaluation of impact of the international tsunami response (both as part of coalition and co-manager of thematic evaluation on local and national capacities.

(b) Programmatic evaluations:

(i) Country Evaluations – ADRs in 2006: Bhutan, Colombia, Jordan, Lao PDR, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Serbia and Montenegro, and a cluster evaluation of Regional Bureau for Arab States net contributor countries.

(ii) Joint evaluation of GEF activity cycle and modalities;

76. The *proposed* programme of work 2006-2007 is as follows:

(a) Strategic evaluations:

(i) Evaluation of results based management in UNDP;

(ii) Evaluation of mainstreaming energy and environment into governance and poverty reduction;

(iii) Evaluation of UNDP engagement with new international cooperation modalities;

(iv) Joint Evaluation of UNDP-UNIDO partnership (requested by the UNIDO Board).

(b) Programmatic evaluations:

(i) South-South Cooperation Programme;

(ii) Evaluation of the regional cooperation framework (RCF) in Africa;

(iii) Evaluation of the RCF in Asia and the Pacific;

(iv) Evaluation of the RCF in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(v) Eight ADRs in 2007 (to be identified);

(vi) Country-level evaluations in collaboration with UNEG, including the Republic of South Africa and two other countries.

77. Quality enhancement of the evaluation function and practice: standard-setting and quality assurance system development, guidelines, operational procedures, tool kits; dissemination and outreach; reports and knowledge products.

78. The annex provides evaluation statistics in tabular and graphic form.

Annex. Evaluation statistics

Table 1. Evaluations at a glance, 2005

Type of evaluation	Units				
	UNDP	UNCDF	UNIFEM	UNV	Total
Strategic evaluation					
Evaluations conducted by UNDP Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of associated funds and programmes	2	0	5	0	7
Evaluations managed by units responsible for programmes	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	2	0	5	0	7
Programmatic evaluation					
Evaluations conducted by UNDP Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of associated funds and programmes	5	0	0	0	5
Evaluations managed by units responsible for programmes	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	5	0	0	0	5
Outcome evaluation					
Evaluations conducted by UNDP Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of associated funds and programmes	0	0	1	0	1
Evaluations managed by units responsible for programmes	68	0	0	0	68
Subtotal	68	0	1	0	69
Project evaluation					
Evaluations conducted by UNDP Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of associated funds and programmes	0	7	2	6	15
Evaluations managed by units responsible for programmes	204*	0	0	0	204
Subtotal	204	7	2	6	219
Total	**279**	**7**	**8**	**6**	**300**

* This includes one evaluation conducted by a GEF regional office.

Table 2. Outcome evaluation compliance 2005

Region	No. of countries subject to compliance*	Level of compliance		
		Full**	Partial***	None****
Africa		1	0	3
Subtotal	**4**	**1**	**0**	**3**
Asia / Pacific		1	3	1
Subtotal	**5**	**1**	**3**	**1**
Europe/CIS		3	1	0
Subtotal	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**
Total	13 (100%)	5 (38%)	4 (31%)	4 (31%)

* Finalizing their programming cycle in 2005. There was no country subject to compliance in the Arab States region or the Latin America and the Caribbean region in 2005.

** Fully complaint with the expected number of outcome evaluations, according to the size of the programme.

*** At least one outcome evaluation conducted during the cycle.

**** No outcome evaluation conducted during the cycle.

Table 3. Decentralized evaluations per region and average number of evaluations per country that conducted at least one evaluation

Region	No. of countries	No. of evaluations per region	No. of countries conducted at least one evaluation	% of countries in the region conducted at least one evaluation	Average no. of evaluations (per country that conducted at least one)
Africa	45	64	23	51%	2.8
Arab States	18	30	11	61%	2.7
Asia and the Pacific	25	76	19	76%	4.1
Europe and the CIS	30	50	16	53%	3.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	24	51	16	67%	3.3
All regions	**142**	**271**	**85**	**60%**	**3.2**

Table 4. Decentralized evaluations,*by type (2004 and 2005)

	2004		2005	
	No. of evaluations	% of evaluations (of total evaluations)	No. of evaluations	% of evaluations (of total evaluations)
Outcome evaluations	35	14%	68	25%
Project evaluations	225	86%	203	75%
Total	**262**	**100%**	**271**	**100%**

*Outcome and project evaluations only, as managed by UNDP country offices

Figure 1. Decentralized outcome evaluations, by theme 2004 and 2005

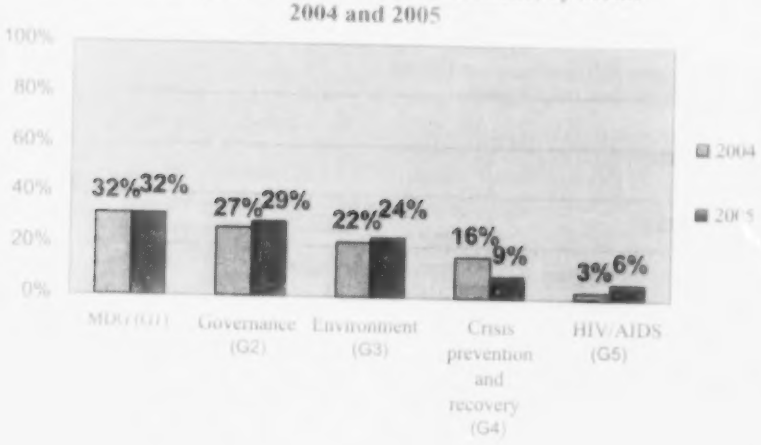


Table 5: Decentralized outcome evaluation, by theme (2004 and 2005)

	2004		2005	
Theme	No. of evaluations by theme	% of evaluations, by theme	No. of evaluations, by theme	% of evaluations, by theme
MDG (G1)	12	32%	22	32%
Governance (G2)	10	27%	20	29%
Environment (G3)	8	22%	16	24%
Crisis Prevention and Recovery (G4)	6	16%	6	9%
HIV/AIDS (G5)	1	3%	4	6%
Total	**37**	**100%**	**68**	**100%**

Table 6: Decentralized outcome evaluations per region

Region	No. of countries	No. of outcome evaluation per region	No. of countries that conducted at least one outcome evaluation	% of countries that conducted at least one outcome evaluation
Africa	45	16	7	16%
Arab States	18	6	5	28%
Asia / Pacific	25	13	6	24%
Europe / CIS	30	19	12	40%
Latin America and the Caribbean	24	14	7	29%
All Regions	**142**	**68**	**37**	**26%**

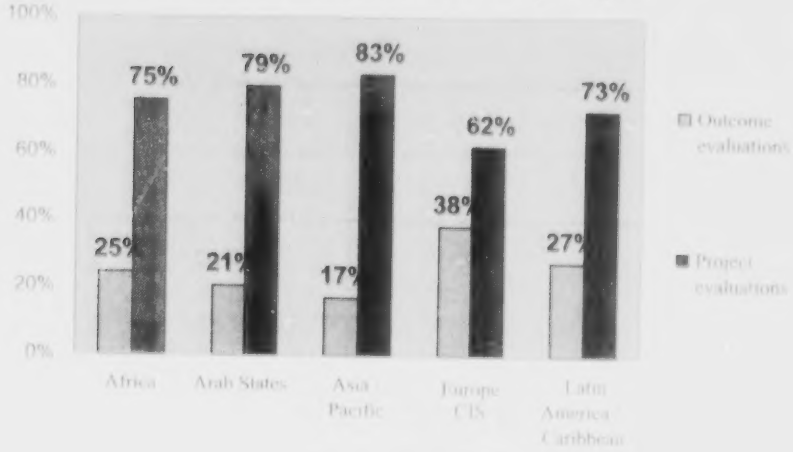
Figure 2: Percentage of country offices that conducted at least one outcome evaluation per region

Table 7. Decentralized evaluations* by type, per region

Region	No. of countries	No. of outcome evaluations	No. of project evaluations	Total no. of evaluations
Africa	45	16	49	65
Arab States	18	6	23	29
Asia / Pacific	25	13	63	77
Europe / CIS	30	19	31	50
Latin America / Caribbean	24	14	37	52
Total	**142**	**68**	**203**	**271**

*Outcome and project evaluations only, as managed by UNDP country offices.

Figure 3. Percentage of outcome and project evaluations in total decentralized evaluations per region



United Nations DP/2006/28

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
5 May 2006

Original: English

Annual session 2006
12 to 23 June 2006, Geneva
Item 15 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

The evaluation policy of UNDP*

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
	Introduction	1-6	2
I.	Guiding principles	7	3
II.	Norms	8	3
III.	Key concepts	9-15	4
IV.	Roles and responsibilities	16-21	5
V.	Types of evaluations conducted by UNDP	22-26	9
VI.	Types of evaluations conducted by the associated funds and programmes	27-30	10
VII.	Mandatory evaluations	31	11
VIII.	Use of evaluation findings and recommendations	32-46	11

* The compilation of data required to present the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

06-34061 (E) 260506

Introduction

1. This paper presents the policy of UNDP for evaluation. The purpose of the policy is to establish a common institutional basis for the UNDP evaluation function. The policy seeks to increase transparency, coherence and efficiency in generating and using evaluative knowledge for organizational learning and effective management for results, and to support accountability. The policy applies to UNDP and its associated funds and programmes – the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The policy also applies to all UNDP-managed programmes, irrespective of funding source.

2. The policy responds to General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 2004 which requires the systematic evaluation of United Nations system operational activities by assessing their impact on poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development of programme countries. It further mandates the United Nations system to promote national ownership and capacity development and to make system-wide progress in collaboration in evaluation. The policy draws from and is aligned with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in April 2005.

3. UNDP subscribes to the overarching United Nations goal of reducing extreme poverty and hunger by half by 2015. It supports the efforts of partner countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development results primarily through its role as a global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build better lives. While emphasizing national ownership and capacity development, UNDP helps countries develop and share solutions to challenges in key strategic development areas. As resident coordinator of United Nations operational activities at the country level, UNDP promotes effective coordination of United Nations system support to national priorities.

4. Evaluation in UNDP will provide an objective assessment of contributions to development results, through assessing its programmes and operations, including advocacy, advisory services, knowledge networks, technical assistance, coordination and partnerships. Evaluation will address what works and why, as well as what does not work and unintended outcomes. This will support accountability, inform decision-making and allow UNDP to better manage for development results.

5. Evaluation will improve learning and knowledge for development among UNDP and its partners. Engagement of all key stakeholders will enhance capacity for evaluation as well as its utility. The development of knowledge-management systems, learning groups and communities of practice will increase access to knowledge and enhance knowledge-sharing, collaboration and innovation.

6. This policy note establishes the guiding principles and norms; explains key evaluation concepts; outlines the main organizational roles and responsibilities; defines the types of evaluation covered; and identifies the key elements of a system for learning and knowledge management. It also outlines the capacity and resource requirements to enhance excellence in the development of an evaluation culture and a learning organization.

I. Guiding principles

7. The following are the key principles.

(a) *Human development and human rights*. Evaluation is guided by the people-centred approach of UNDP to development, which enhances capabilities, choices and rights for all men and women. Evaluation abides by universally shared values of equity, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity.

(b) *United Nations system coordination and global partnership*. Evaluation draws on and contributes to collaboration within the UN system to improve effectiveness and reduce transaction costs for development cooperation. UNDP advocates strengthened professional collaboration under the aegis of UNEG and country-level coordination in evaluation under the Resident Coordinator system. With the increasing engagement of UNDP in global initiatives and partnership programmes with other donors, non-governmental organizations and civil society, the conduct of joint evaluations enhances global partnership.

(c) *National ownership*. Evaluation should be guided by national priorities and concerns. It should be inclusive and take into account diverse national interests and values. Evaluation should strengthen partnerships with governments and key stakeholders. It should build the capacity of national institutions to implement, monitor and evaluate.

(d) *Managing for results*. Evaluation supports UNDP to manage for results by assessing the extent to which UNDP's processes, products and services contribute effectively to development results affecting people's lives. Through this, evaluation highlights the need for quality in the design of programmes so that results are clear, measurable and can be monitored and evaluated. Through the generation of evidence, evaluation enables more informed management and decision-making for strategic planning and programming.

II. Norms

8. UNDP evaluations will operate under norms based on the UNEG norms for evaluation in the United Nations system, as follows:

(a) *Independence*. The evaluation function should be structurally independent from the operational management and decision-making functions in the organization so that it is free from undue influence, more objective, and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making. Management must not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. To avoid conflict of interest, evaluators must not be directly involved in policy-setting, design, implementation or management of the subject of the evaluation either before, during or after the evaluation.

(b) *Intentionality*. The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset. The scope, design and plan of the evaluation should generate relevant, timely products that meet the needs of intended users.

(c) *Transparency*. Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of the evaluation. Full information on evaluation design and methodology should be shared throughout the process to build confidence in the findings and understanding of their limitations in decision-making.

(d) *Ethics*. Evaluation should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Evaluators must have professional integrity and respect the rights of institutions and individuals

to provide information in confidence and to verify statements attributed to them. Evaluations must be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments and must be conducted legally and with due regard to the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its findings. In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

(e) *Impartiality*. Removing bias and maximizing objectivity are critical for the credibility of the evaluation and its contribution to knowledge. Prerequisites for impartiality are: independence from management; objective design; valid measurement and analysis; and the rigorous use of appropriate benchmarks agreed upon beforehand by key stakeholders. In addition to being impartial, evaluation teams should include relevant expertise and be balanced in their gender and regional composition.

(f) *Quality*. All evaluations should meet minimum quality standards defined by the Evaluation Office. The key questions and areas for investigation should be clear, coherent and realistic. The plan for evaluation should be practical and cost effective. To ensure that the information generated is accurate and reliable, evaluation design, data collection and analysis should reflect professional standards, with due regard for any special circumstances or limitations reflecting the context of the evaluation. To ensure this, the professionalism of evaluators and their intellectual integrity in applying standard evaluation methods is critical. Evaluation findings and recommendations should be presented in a manner that will be readily understood by target audiences.

(g) *Timeliness*. Evaluations must be designed and completed in a timely fashion so as to address the specific purpose and objectives for which they were commissioned and ensure the usefulness of the findings and recommendations. Balancing technical and time requirements with practical realities while providing valid, reliable information is central to ensuring that the evaluation function supports management for results.

(h) *Utility*. Evaluation is a management discipline that seeks to provide information to be used for evidence-based decision-making. To enhance the usefulness of the findings and recommendations, key stakeholders should be engaged in various ways in the conduct of the evaluation. The scope, design and plan of the evaluation should generate relevant, timely products that meet the needs of intended users. The interpretation of findings should be grounded in the realities of the country and programme context, and the recommendations made should be practical and realistic.

III. Key concepts

9. *Evaluation*. Evaluation is judgment made of the relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of development efforts, based on agreed criteria and benchmarks among key partners and stakeholders. It involves a rigorous, systematic and objective process in the design, analysis and interpretation of information to answer specific questions. It provides assessments of what works and why, highlights intended and unintended results, and provides strategic lessons to guide decision-makers and inform stakeholders.

10. *Monitoring*. Monitoring is distinct from evaluation. It is a continuous function providing managers and key stakeholders with regular feedback on the consistency

on discrepancy between planned and actual activities and programme performance and on the internal and external factors affecting results. Monitoring provides an early indication of the likelihood that expected results will be attained. It provides an opportunity to validate the programme theory and logic and to make necessary changes in programme activities and approaches. Information from systematic monitoring serves as a critical input to evaluation.

Definition

11. Development results:

(a) *Output*: Tangible product (including services) of an intervention that is directly attributable to the initiative. Outputs relate to the completion (rather than the conduct) of activities and are the type of results over which managers have most influence. An example of an output for a project for judicial reform is the number of judges trained and qualified.

(b) *Outcome*: Actual or intended changes in development conditions that an intervention(s) seeks to support. The contribution of several partners is usually required to achieve an outcome. Using the same example an outcome is the improvement in the judicial process as evidenced by a reduction in the backlog of cases.

(c) *Impact*: Actual or intended changes in human development as measured by people's well-being. In this example, an impact is that more people have access to justice and are better able to exercise their rights.

12. *Attribution*: The precise causal link to changes in development results flowing from an individual intervention. For example, the number of judges trained could be directly attributed to a specific intervention.

13. Contribution: The changes in development results that can be credibly linked to an intervention. Contribution implies a logical cause and effect relationship which points to the meaningful input of an intervention to the development result(s). For instance, improvement in the judicial process could result from the interventions of several actors working to train judges, improve administrative processes or bring about changes in legislative policy.

14. *Organizational effectiveness*: The more direct, accountable and attributable measures of performance over which the organization has relatively more control or manageable interests.

15. *Development effectiveness*: The extent to which the intended development goals of a country are achieved through the agency of the government, civil society and development partners. Evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the partners' contribution in enhancing the factors and conditions that enable countries to achieve their development goals.

IV. Roles and responsibilities

16. The roles and responsibilities of the key constituents of the UNDP evaluation system are identified below.

17. *The Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA* is the custodian of the evaluation policy. The Executive Board:

(a) approves the evaluation policy;

(b) ensures the independence of the evaluation function;

(c) approves the annual work programme for the centralised evaluation function;

(d) requires management response and follow-up to evaluation by UNDP; and

(e) uses evaluation and reports on compliance with evaluation policy for accountability; and

(f) draws on the findings and recommendations of evaluation for oversight and approval of corporate policy, strategy and programmes.

18. *The Evaluation Office* is the custodian of the evaluation function. The Evaluation Office will:

(a) *Governance and accountability*

(i) prepare and periodically review and update UNDP's policy for evaluation;

(ii) submit its annual plan to the Executive Board;

(iii) report annually to the Executive Board on the function, findings and recommendations of evaluations, on compliance, quality assurance, and follow-up to evaluations conducted by UNDP and its associated funds and programmes;

(iv) maintain a system to record management responses to all evaluations; and

(v) alert senior management to emerging evaluation-related issues of corporate significance;

(b) *Conduct of evaluations*

(i) develop an agenda for independent evaluations, based on consultations with the Executive Board, senior management, the associated funds and programmes and other stakeholders, and in response to emerging issues that the Evaluation Office may identify;

(ii) conduct strategic and thematic evaluations, programme evaluations such as the Assessment of Development Results (ADRs) at the country level, evaluations of global, regional, and South-South programmes, and other evaluations as required; and

(iii) ensure that the evaluations provide strategic and representative coverage of UNDP programmes and results, and that mandatory evaluations are carried out;

(c) *Quality assurance*

(i) set evaluation standards for planning, conducting and using evaluations, developing and disseminating methodology and establishing the institutional mechanisms for applying the standards;

(ii) support the setting of frameworks and standards for monitoring in the context of the UNDP results-based management system to facilitate the evaluation of programmes and activities; and

(iii) assure mandatory decentralized evaluations and support quality assurance of the evaluations conducted by the associated funds and programmes;

(d) *Capacity development*

(i) build knowledge of good practice standards and approaches for evaluation management in UNDP; and

(ii) strengthen programme country evaluation capacity and involvement in evaluations through country-led evaluations, joint evaluations and use of partner country professional resources;

(e) *Knowledge management*

(i) maintain a publicly accessible repository of evaluations;

(ii) distil evaluation findings and lessons for dissemination in appropriate formats for targeted audiences; and

(iii) support the development of learning groups and communities of practice in evaluation by establishing and supporting knowledge networks;

(f) *United Nations reform*

(i) ensure that evaluation in UNDP contributes to and remains consistent with UN policy and reforms including supporting and participating in joint evaluations;

(ii) support the harmonization of the evaluation function of UNDP and its associated funds and programmes;

(iii) contribute evaluative evidence to system-wide evaluations, such as the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review; and

(iv) use the experience of UNDP and its partners, including through working with UNEG, to advance the science, practice, quality and usefulness of evaluation.

19. The *Administrator of UNDP* is accountable for UNDP results, and:

(a) ensures compliance with the evaluation policy as integral to effective accountability across the organization;

(b) safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function and its independence from operational management;

(c) appoints the Director of the Evaluation Office, in consultation with the Executive Board, and ensures that there is no conflict of interest in employment, including limiting the term of appointment to four years, renewable once, and barring reentry into the organization;

(d) safeguards the independence of the Evaluation Office by ensuring that the Director has the final say on the contents of all evaluation reports issued by the Evaluation Office;

(e) provides sufficient resources and capacity for evaluation in the organization;

(f) ensures that UNDP prepares a management response to evaluations that are submitted to the Executive Board; and

(g) ensures that senior management responds to and utilizes evaluation in their operational, strategic, policy and oversight functions and that appropriate follow-up to the findings and recommendations of evaluation is taken by the relevant units.

20. The *senior management of country offices, regional bureaux, practice and policy bureaux, and the associated funds and programmes* will:

(a) ensure the evaluability of programmes by identifying clear results, developing measurable indicators, and establishing performance targets and baseline information;

(b) in collaboration with national stakeholders and partners, ensure the effective monitoring of implementation and performance of programmes to generate relevant, timely information for management for results and evaluation;

(c) identify, with partner governments and key stakeholders, priority areas for evaluation when preparing the programme, and designing and implementing a strategic evaluation plan;

(d) establish an appropriate institutional arrangement to manage evaluation;

(e) ensure adequate resources for evaluation;

(f) safeguard the independence of the evaluation process and product;

(g) ensure the conduct of mandatory evaluations in line with established quality standards;

(h) promote joint evaluation work with the United Nations system and other partners and, in the case of country offices, contribute to the UNDAF evaluation;

(i) prepare management responses to all evaluations, and ensure and track appropriate, timely implementation of the agreed evaluation recommendations;

(j) draw on evaluation findings to improve the quality of programmes, guide strategic decision-making on future programming and positioning, and share knowledge on development experience;

(k) ensure the transparency of, and public access to, all evaluation reports; and

(l) Directors of regional bureaux, in their exercise of line oversight, ensure compliance by country offices with mandatory requirements of the evaluation policy, and support and guide country office capacity in evaluation, including establishing regional expertise and evaluation support systems.

21. *Evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes* are the custodians of the evaluation function in their organizations, and they will, respectively, for their fund or programme:

(a) periodically review and revise, as necessary, the evaluation policy;

(b) contribute to the development by the Evaluation Office of common evaluation quality standards and guidelines;

(c) support the elaboration of well-defined results frameworks to facilitate the evaluation of programmes and activities;

(d) submit to their senior management a biennial plan and budget for the evaluation unit;

(e) develop, in consultation with key stakeholders, an annual agenda of evaluations to be conducted;

(f) manage and conduct evaluations;

(g) ensure, whenever possible, joint evaluation work with the United Nations system and other partners;

(h) quality-assure mandatory evaluations outsourced or managed by programme staff;

(i) ensure the maintenance of a publicly accessible repository of evaluations;

(j) ensure the dissemination of evaluation findings and lessons in appropriate formats for targeted audiences, and promote their consideration in decision-making and for learning;

(k) track management response and follow-up to agreed evaluation recommendations;

(l) alert their senior management to evaluation-related issues of corporate significance;

(m) provide input to the annual report on evaluation to the Executive Board;

(n) contribute to developing evaluation capacity

(o) ensure consistency with United Nations policy and reforms, and contribute to improving evaluation collaboration, quality and usefulness, including through participation in UNEG.

V. Types of evaluations conducted by UNDP

22. The evaluations conducted by UNDP fall into two categories: independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, and decentralized evaluations managed by country offices, regional bureaux and practice and policy bureaux, and conducted by external experts. Together they represent a coherent system of evaluation that provides the necessary coverage to manage for results and to support organizational accountability.

Evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office

23. The Evaluation Office is mandated to conduct evaluations for corporate accountability, strategic planning, and the development of information for global knowledge use.

(a) *Strategic evaluations* assess UNDP performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results in the context of emerging development issues and changing priorities at the global and regional levels. To this end, strategic evaluations may cover, for example, UNDP policies, practice areas, partnerships, programmatic approaches, cooperation modalities, or business models. The Evaluation Office will also engage in evaluations conducted jointly with other United Nations organizations to assess system-wide performance.

(b) *Programmatic evaluations*

(i) *Global, regional and South-South* programme evaluations assess the performance and intended and achieved results of those programmes. They are intended to reinforce the substantive accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board, and will be timed to contribute to the preparation and approval of the next programme.

(ii) Assessments of Development Results (*ADRs*) assess the attainment of intended and achieved results as well as UNDP contributions to development results at the country level. Their scope will include, but not necessarily be confined to, UNDP responsiveness and alignment to country challenges and priorities; strategic positioning; use of comparative advantage; and engagement with partners. The number and selection of countries, and the timing of these evaluations, will be determined to ensure coverage and to allow findings and recommendations to feed into the preparation of the subsequent programme. Wherever possible, these evaluations will be conducted in conjunction with other United Nations organizations.

Decentralized evaluations

24. Country offices, regional bureaux, and practice and policy bureaux commission evaluations in the programmatic frameworks for which they are responsible. All programme areas or project clusters should be subject to evaluation. The selection of what is evaluated and the number of evaluations are decided with stakeholders at the outset of the programme cycle. The focus is on information for programme improvement and the development of new programmatic frameworks. The information also provides the basis for strategic and programmatic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office as described above. The key decentralized evaluations are the following:

25. *Outcome evaluations* address the short-term, medium-term and long-term results of a programme or cluster of related UNDP projects. They include an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and relevance of the

programme against their own objectives, their combined contribution, and the contribution of external factors and actors. Outcome evaluations also examine non-intended effects of the programme or projects. Rather than being ad hoc, the selection of the programme or project cluster to be evaluated should be guided by strategic decisions made by the programme unit, in line with the evaluation plan. This decision should be informed by agreements with national government and key stakeholders and partnership requirements, with attention to utility and linkage with strategic and programmatic evaluations.

26. *Project evaluations* assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a project in achieving its intended results. They also assess the relevance and sustainability of outputs as contributions to medium-term and longer-term outcomes. Projects can be evaluated during the time of implementation, at the end of implementation (terminal evaluation), or after a period of time after the project has ended (ex-post evaluation). Project evaluation can be invaluable for managing for results, and serves to reinforce the accountability of project managers. Additionally, project evaluation provides a basis for the evaluation of outcomes and programmes, as well as for strategic and programmatic evaluations and ADRs, and for distilling lessons from experience for learning and sharing knowledge. In UNDP, project evaluations are mandatory when required by a partnership protocol, such as with the Global Environment Facility.

VI. Types of evaluations conducted by the associated funds and programmes

27. *Strategic and thematic evaluations* provide a basis for developing forward-looking strategies for organizational effectiveness and core thematic programme areas. They involve reviews of past experience to identify strengths and gaps in the approach and results relating to a particular aspect of the organization and its approach, or to a thematic programme area. They may also include a review of the global trends and partner practices in the organizational or thematic area to determine whether approaches and interventions are relevant. Strategic and thematic evaluations are undertaken by UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNV.

28. *Country reviews* assess the comprehensive coverage of the programme contribution to projects and support provided by the organization; they are the only mechanism that measures the contribution of non-project-related volunteer assignment. Country reviews are undertaken by UNV, and are typically conducted in countries where there has been a significant UNV presence over a period of time.

29. *Outcome evaluations* assess projects or clusters of related programmes in terms of their contribution to the achievement of target outcomes. Outcome evaluations are undertaken by UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNV.

30. *Programme and projects evaluations* focus on evaluating performance mid-way through and at the end of the programme cycle. They assess the specific contributions, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of interventions, as well as strategic positioning and partnerships. Programme and projects evaluations are undertaken by UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNV.

VII. Mandatory evaluations

31. The table below presents mandatory evaluations and the responsible units.

Mandatory evaluations

Responsibility	Type of evaluation
Evaluation Office	Strategic evaluations Evaluations of: - Global programme - Regional programmes - South-South programme ADRs at the country level
Country offices	Outcome evaluation(s) identified in the evaluation plan Project evaluations, when required by a partnership protocol or national priority
Regional bureaux	Outcome evaluation(s) identified in the evaluation plan Project evaluations, when required by a partnership protocol
Practice and policy bureaux and units	Outcome evaluations, as identified in the evaluation plan, of: - Global programmes - Practice areas - South-South programmes Project evaluations when required by a partnership protocol
UNCDF	Mid-term and final evaluation of all programmes of a duration of five years or more and a budget of $2.5 million or more, or when stipulated in a partnership agreement.
UNIFEM	One thematic assessment every two years One evaluation during the lifecycle for all programmes with a budget of between $1 million and $3 million Mid-term and final evaluation of all programmes with a budget of $3 million or more
UNV	Mid-term and final evaluation of projects and initiatives financed from the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF)

VIII. Use of evaluation findings and recommendations

32. Units responsible for functions or programmes that have been evaluated should systematically implement evaluation recommendations when these have been agreed

to by management. All evaluations will have a management response. The Evaluation Office will maintain a system to track management responses to evaluations. The responsible unit should periodically update the status of follow-up actions in the tracking system. Programme audits also routinely check the status of follow-up actions to recommendations made by evaluations, as well as the implementation of agreed management responses to evaluations, in the period covered by the audit. The Evaluation Office will periodically brief those with oversight function on the status of follow-up to evaluation recommendations and implementation of management responses, and will alert senior management to any areas of concern.

33. All UNDP evaluation reports will be made public. The Director of the Evaluation Office is responsible for authorizing the dissemination of evaluation reports and related material. Resident Representatives, Regional bureau directors, and directors of practice and policy bureaux are required to disclose all evaluations commissioned by their respective units.

34. To facilitate wider use and dissemination of evaluation findings, the executive summary of all strategic evaluations will be translated into the three working languages of UNDP. Country offices are encouraged to translate a summary of evaluations into local languages and use other means in order to inform stakeholders of findings and for learning. The Evaluation Office will be responsible for a communication and outreach programme to expand the effective use of evaluation findings and the development of a learning community.

35. The Evaluation Office supports systems and initiatives with partners to promote access to evaluative evidence by target audiences. The Evaluation Office manages an online repository of evaluations that can be used to distil lessons and contribute to peer learning and the preparation of specifically tailored materials for staff training and briefings. The UNDP evaluation network is an active forum for expert referral and dialogue, and for sharing comparative experiences.

Capacity for evaluation

36. UNDP espouses the highest levels of quality and rigour in the conduct of evaluation and seeks to enhance the capacity of all units engaged in the conduct and management of evaluations.

37. The Evaluation Office, and the evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes, require the specialized and technical expertise to fulfill their mandate. Likewise, country offices, regional bureaux, and practice and policy bureaux require technical and managerial expertise for commissioning and using evaluation for their programmes.

38. EO will support a network of evaluation practitioners who will be responsible for nurturing a culture of evaluation in the organization by integrating evaluation into training programmes; promoting the use of quality standards; disseminating methodologies; providing technical guidance; and sharing evaluative knowledge.

39. The evaluation community in UNDP, in collaboration with the United Nations system, will seek to partner with, and build and draw upon, national and regional capacities in evaluation so as to encourage innovation and increase relevance.

Resources

40. Evaluations of global, regional and country programmes and strategic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office will be funded with resources approved as part of these respective programmes.

41. Country offices, regional bureaux, and practice and policy bureaux will be required to: (a) prepare an evaluation plan, based on guidelines established by the Evaluation Office, which will include mandatory and other evaluations; and (b) cost this plan, and allocate the requisite funds from appropriate project and programme budgets.

42. Resources allocated for evaluation should be used in a cost-effective manner. Whenever possible, the use of resources should be coordinated with related national, United Nations and other evaluation efforts. Cost-effectiveness should be ensured by following a pre-established, costed plan, shared in a timely way with all major partners, with a view to encouraging collaboration and/or joint evaluation.

Partnerships

43. Success in carrying out development evaluation requires partnerships in evaluation, with national and international actors. UNDP will promote joint and country-led evaluations to respond to the expanding sectoral and programmatic nature of development cooperation.

44. The Evaluation Office engages in partnerships with professional evaluation networks, including UNEG, the Development Assistance Committee Network on Evaluation, the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the multilateral development banks, and regional professional organizations to enhance quality and credibility.

45. Country offices should nurture a collaborative relationship with national evaluation institutions and associations. Such partnerships enhance the relevance, quality and utility of UNDP evaluation and its contribution to development, and can help build national capacity for evaluation.

46. The implementation of the present evaluation policy, and the evaluation function, will be reviewed periodically to extract lessons and make improvements. The first such review will take place in mid-2009.

United Nations DP/2006/29

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
13 April 2006

Original: English

Annual session 2006
12 to 23 June 2006, Geneva
Item 15 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Evaluation of the role and contributions of UNDP in the HIV and AIDS response in Southern Africa and Ethiopia

Contents

Chapter *Page*

I. Introduction . . . 2
A. Rationale . . . 2
B. Objectives . . . 2
C. Concepts and methodology . . . 3
II. Context . . . 4
III. Findings . . . 6
A. Relevance and effectiveness of UNDP role and contributions . . . 7
B. Strategy and management of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response . . . 11
C. Monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response . . . 12
IV. Recommendations . . . 13

06-31220 (E) 040506

I. Introduction

A. Rationale

1. Southern Africa is the subregion where the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the most devastating in the world, and where the danger to sustaining development achievements is the greatest. The subregion is also suffering from the effects of poverty, drought and famine, and the severe erosion of human capacities. A number of factors, including social circumstances, economic conditions and population mobility, have combined to increase the severity of the epidemic in the region. Further, HIV/AIDS disproportionately affect women and adolescent girls. Gender differences are at the root of a number of social, economic and political factors that drive the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Without an understanding of the complex relationship between gender and HIV/AIDS, strategies devised to tackle the epidemic are not likely to succeed.

2. As part of its 2004/2005 evaluation agenda, the Evaluation Office undertook a strategic evaluation of the role of UNDP and its support in addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. Country assessments were conducted in 10 countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Ethiopia, in the Horn of Africa, was also included since it is estimated to have the second highest number of AIDS-infected people in Africa (after South Africa); it also suffers from chronic food shortage and famine, which have sharply increased its vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In addition, Angola and Ethiopia are countries that have recently emerged from conflict.

3. That evaluation was one of three thematic evaluations undertaken at the corporate level by the Evaluation Office during this period. The others were on the second Global Cooperation Framework (GCF-II) and gender mainstreaming. The gender mainstreaming evaluation was relevant to this one in that it assessed the links between gender and HIV/AIDS in UNDP programming. Although the relationships between men and women are central to prevention, protection and care, the evaluation did not find an explicit gender mainstreaming strategy for the HIV/AIDS practice area.

4. The present report provides a summary of the key findings of the evaluation, which was carried out by a team of four international and 10 national consultants between November 2004 and November 2005.

B. Objectives

5. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the role and contributions of UNDP in the achievement of key outcomes at the country level. This included a review of the UNDP role and contributions in the policy and planning choices made by countries in relation to HIV/AIDS. The terms of reference called upon the evaluation to assess whether UNDP was targeting the right areas and taking the correct approach, and to assess the outcomes of its strategy, programmes and projects in addressing HIV/AIDS at the country level. The terms of reference called for the evaluation to be strategic and forward-looking. It was expected to assist the UNDP country offices concerned to position themselves for an increasingly effective role in HIV/AIDS, with appropriate contributions from corporate units and

the Regional Centre for Southern Africa. The findings were also expected to contribute to future UNDP strategies and programmes on HIV/AIDS.

C. Concepts and methodology

6. The evaluation covered the period 1999 through 2004, but the report takes into account many critical developments in the HIV/AIDS response in 2005. The evaluation focused largely on UNDP contributions and outcomes and the environment in which UNDP HIV/AIDS activity at the country level has taken place. HIV/AIDS activities of other partners were not assessed. The outcome evaluation approach moved the evaluators away from assessing project progress and results against project plans, towards an assessment of how UNDP actions have contributed to changes in development conditions in ways that may or may not have been planned explicitly. A main challenge of the evaluation lay in understanding the nature of those changes and in grasping the UNDP association with them. Triangulation of information from several data sources at the country and international levels was used to validate outcomes and to confirm the findings of evaluation team. Frequently and strongly articulated views of informants were considered to have more weight.

Scope and approach

7. The evaluation covered the period that began in 1999, with the introduction of a strategic results framework (SRF), and included an overview of budgeted activities that were either ongoing or had not yet begun. It reviewed evaluative evidence provided through available outcome evaluations at the country, regional and subregional levels conducted by UNDP. The evaluation aimed also to review the potential and strategic contributions of UNDP towards the multi-year funding framework (MYFF), 2004-2007, in which responding to HIV/AIDS had become a separate corporate level goal. The focus of the evaluation was at the country level.

Methods

8. The evaluation used a variety of approaches and data sources, which allowed the team to triangulate its research and arrive at robust findings:

(a) A preliminary review of internal UNDP documents.

(b) Country assessments undertaken by national consultants in 10 countries and six country visits by international consultants. The assessments involved interviews and focus groups, and included views of UNDP and other United Nations organization staff, donors, government officials, people in community based organizations, women's organizations, and academics. Each country report provided context and other background information.

(c) Policy interviews in New York and several other locations, with key personnel from UNDP, from other United Nations bodies, and from partner organizations.

Limitations

9. The contributions and outcomes analyzed in the evaluation reflected that notable changes had been identified. However, at the time of the evaluation many interventions had not been implemented for an extended period. Where outcomes were evident, they were often intermediate, incremental and/or limited in scale and scope. There were limitations on ability to triangulate and validate views. Validation

was often made more difficult by a scarcity of quantitative or other clearly documented evidence. Since the field work of the evaluation concentrated on the work of UNDP, the team was unable to gain as much understanding of donor partner activities as would have been desirable for a thorough assessment of UNDP comparative advantages with respect to HIV/AIDS.

10. Weaknesses in monitoring and especially in outcome-oriented evaluation at the country office level also impeded the successful accomplishment of the evaluation task. Additional limitations were encountered because UNDP was often only one of several players associated with an outcome. Nonetheless, in the view of the evaluation team the review of contributions and outcomes is sufficiently robust to permit presenting a number of conclusions and raising key strategic issues that are likely to be valid and have implications for strengthening the role played by UNDP in HIV/AIDS response.

II. Context

The global context

11. Heads of State from around the world adopted the Millennium Declaration in September 2000. Included in it are eight development goals, comprising an ambitious agenda for reducing and ultimately eliminating poverty. Of these, Goal 6 calls for halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases by 2015.

12. In June 2001, at the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, Heads of State and Government adopted by acclamation the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, 'Global Crisis – Global Action' (resolution S-26/2) to express their commitment to addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis. The Declaration articulated measurable goals to reverse the epidemic, including targets in several key areas. It also called for a fundamental shift in the global response to HIV/AIDS as not only a public health dilemma, but a global economic, social and development issue of the highest priority, and the single greatest threat to the well-being of future generations. A commitment was also made at the special session to create the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), in the recognition that if brought to scale, efforts to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria could change the course of these diseases.

The UNDP institutional and policy environment

13. UNDP has been advocating for action against HIV/AIDS around the globe since the late 1980s. In 2000, it made HIV/AIDS one of its top organizational priorities, integrating it into broader efforts to support effective democratic governance and poverty reduction. Since June 2001, several Executive Board sessions have been devoted to reviewing UNDP contributions towards reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic within the context of the United Nations System Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS for 2001-2005. This culminated in the decision to make HIV/AIDS a vital consideration for UNDP during the second MYFF period (2004-2007), and one of five core goals for the organization – Goal 5: Responding to HIV/AIDS. This will contribute directly to MDG 6 on combating HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS service lines were consolidated from five to three areas under the second MYFF: leadership and capacity development to address HIV/AIDS; development planning, implementation and HIV/AIDS response; and advocacy and communication to address HIV/AIDS.

Growth in external financial resources to fight HIV/AIDS

14. Considerable growth in external financial support for the fight against HIV/AIDS began to be seen at the country level during the review period. This has led to dramatic increases in total public expenditure on health in some case-study countries (potentially as high as 700% in Zambia, for example). The consequences include new challenges for developing countries in managing public finances and ensuring that donors respect country priorities. This implies, also, changes in the needs of the national partners of UNDP, which now require more support than in the past for the mobilization and especially the effective use of newly programmed and pledged external financial resources for HIV/AIDS.

15. Headquarters data suggest that between 1999 and 2004 total UNDP planned spending for HIV/AIDS projects and activities from its own resources was at least $3 million per year in the ten case-study countries. Cost-sharing resources brought the total to nearly $6.5 million per year, or a minimum of $21 million in the case-study countries over the period of the evaluation. In contrast, Global Fund commitments in the case-study countries amounted to $312 million for signed grants, as of April 2005. Thus, UNDP is becoming, relatively, a smaller player on the HIV/AIDS scene than it was in the 1990s, but the evaluation found that it has had important accomplishments in relation to the size of its funding.

UNDP, the United Nations system and the international community

16. There has been virtually universal recognition of the central position of UNDP resident representatives and United Nations resident coordinators in the international system of development support. In the case-study countries, the UNDP coordination role sometimes extended beyond United Nations organizations to include additional partners, especially where new financial resources were programmed by non-United Nations organizations.

The comparative advantages of UNDP in the fight against HIV/AIDS

17. Sometimes, it was not clear whether the comparative advantage of UNDP was viewed as actual or only potential. Too often UNDP leadership was seen as bureaucratic and diplomatic rather than substantial and development-oriented. UNDP might achieve development results as much by trust and facilitation as by the provision of financial resources. The Secretary-General has called for the creation of joint United Nations HIV/AIDS teams at the country level, and UNDP must be at the heart of the implementation of this new arrangement.

18. The comparative advantages of UNDP in the HIV/AIDS response vary from country to country. Nonetheless, the evaluation team was firmly convinced of one key comparative advantage that is institutional in character: The position of UNDP as coordinator and voice for the United Nations system and United Nations country teams.

19. As financial resources from non-United Nations institutions assume greater relative prominence, UNDP risks losing relevance at the country level unless it gives greater attention to coordination beyond the United Nations system. The generally strong relationships between UNDP and governments represent another key comparative advantage, but one that has been under-used in the case-study countries. The ability to promote and facilitate mainstreaming and integration of HIV/AIDS issues into development and poverty reduction strategies *should* be a

comparative advantage of UNDP in all countries, as was the case in Angola and Swaziland.

20. UNDP was also thought to have a comparative advantage in addressing certain aspects of AIDS-related governance issues, including decentralized support to the HIV/AIDS response, the human rights dimensions, and gender. The evaluation perceived a UNDP comparative advantage in facilitating the effective involvement of other smaller United Nations organizations and donors, especially in smaller countries and where major donors are relatively less active.

21. Finally, the evaluation found that UNDP *should* have a comparative advantage in capacity development, as in its work for decentralized HIV/AIDS responses in Botswana and Zambia. Developing and using all of its potential comparative advantages at the country level poses continuing challenges.

III. Findings

22. The relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP HIV/AIDS responses represent core issues for the evaluation. They are discussed in the following three sections: on the key contributions and outcomes of UNDP engagement in HIV/AIDS; on the UNDP HIV/AIDS strategy and management of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response; and on the monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response. The evaluation determined that UNDP has played multiple roles in the HIV/AIDS response at the country level.

23. The evaluation found that, in general, the roles and contributions of UNDP were relevant to the situations of its partner countries, but that they risk losing relevance in some cases, as the environment for UNDP engagement changes. In a number of areas it was too soon to assess the effectiveness of the UNDP response in achieving development impact, but certain important contributions and outcomes were identified, along with some missed opportunities and marked inter-country variations in programmes and results. Limited attention to monitoring, evaluation and exit strategies was found to impede UNDP effectiveness and the sustainability of UNDP interventions.

24. Overall, the evaluation found UNDP supporting those programmes and activities that it had said it would support. Activities – frequently at the pilot level – included leadership development programmes for HIV/AIDS-related leadership training; community conversations to engage and stimulate HIV/AIDS-related initiatives at that level; capacity development and policy support to national HIV/AIDS commissions and councils; support to decentralized HIV/AIDS responses at provincial, district and local government levels; support for the elaboration of HIV/AIDS-related policies, including action related to gender and stigma; support for civil society organizations (CSOs) in their HIV/AIDS responses; generation of knowledge through activities such as national human development reports related to HIV/AIDS; mainstreaming or facilitating integration of HIV/AIDS issues into activities beyond the traditional HIV/AIDS "sector"; support for workplace HIV/AIDS responses in the United Nations family of institutions, and partnership actions for country results.

25. Beyond the activities that UNDP financed, UNDP country office managers and staff were engaged at various levels in stimulating HIV/AIDS policy development, planning, and action at the country level.

26. The signal accomplishment of UNDP, as revealed by the evaluation, lies in moving HIV/AIDS paradigms from biomedical towards development perspectives in almost all the case-study countries. UNDP was acknowledged for helping to institutionalize this shift in development planning and management. The shift was part of a global change, but UNDP was widely considered to have been instrumental in successfully advocating for it within countries. Support at the country level in systematically promoting the shift has been significant.

27. However, together with its partners, UNDP has achieved only limited change in translating awareness and policy acceptance into actions, especially beyond the HIV/AIDS 'sector.' In addition, the recent growth in external financial resources and consequential prominence of treatment creates the danger that developmental approaches to combating the epidemic may lose attention.

A. Relevance and effectiveness of UNDP role and contributions

28. Five themes were used as the substantial organizing framework for the evaluation — governance in relation to HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS leadership, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into other development activities, capacity development for HIV/AIDS response, and partnerships for country results.

Governance, including gender and CSO engagement

29. UNDP contributed substantially to the biomedical to developmental paradigm shift in perspectives on HIV/AIDS and greater commitment of governments and their partners towards sound processes, structures, policies and strategies that shape national responses. Three significant outcomes stand out: changing national policies and strategic frameworks for managing HIV/AIDS; strengthening decentralized HIV/AIDS institutions; and increasing the presence and voice of CSOs and vulnerable groups in advocacy and participation. The quality, effectiveness and sustainability of changes in these three areas were mixed.

30. There are ongoing challenges to enhance the roles and performance of national HIV/AIDS commissions and decentralized structures, and the participation of key stakeholders, including vulnerable groups. There were also indications that the quality of country strategies to address these issues in the case-study countries could be improved, and that plans to translate these strategies into action were often not well developed.

31. The reputation of UNDP for strong links with government created unexploited opportunities for influence on HIV/AIDS governance. Many other development partners have become involved in strengthening national HIV/AIDS structures and governance, often with larger financial and human resources than UNDP has available.

32. Gender and HIV/AIDS are inextricably linked. Gender inequality is a key factor in the HIV/AIDS epidemic among women. As is commonly known, young girls are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Several UNDP initiatives, particularly at the community level, have positively and markedly influenced gender dynamics.

33. The evaluation found it difficult to establish that UNDP programmes had achieved change in gender-related issues concerning HIV/AIDS on a significant scale. In a number of countries, UNDP has promoted the increasing recognition of

the presence, voice, rights and enhancement of the roles of CSOs, people living with HIV and AIDS, and women, in HIV/AIDS governance and in multi-sectoral responses. UNDP spearheaded initiatives to establish and strengthen umbrella or coordinating CSOs, but did not provide enough support to achieve measurable impact, especially at the peripheral levels where populations most need support from CSOs.

Leadership

34. UNDP has helped strengthen HIV/AIDS-related leadership through programmatic interventions that develop leadership among politicians and government officials, community and civil society bodies, and some private-sector entities. In addition, the UNDP country offices themselves, through the interventions of resident representatives, resident coordinators and country office staff, have contributed to HIV/AIDS leadership. However, there is still a great need to enhance HIV/AIDS-related leadership in the case-study countries.

35. The evaluation found inspiring examples of leadership 'breakthroughs', particularly in the UNDP community conversations and leadership development programmes. However, at the time of the evaluation it was uncertain whether various UNDP interventions, including its Leadership Development Programme, had achieved sufficient scale and depth to respond fully to leadership needs.

36. With a few exceptions, in-depth monitoring and evaluation of UNDP leadership initiatives was lacking. It was therefore difficult to ensure that effective interventions received adequate support, and that interventions that were supported represented true areas of comparative advantage for UNDP in relation to its other HIV/AIDS work and the work of its development partners. The UNDP concentration on individual leadership development needed to be complemented by emphasis on group leadership.

Mainstreaming

37. UNDP has contributed to acceptance of the multi-sectoral nature of the epidemic and the need for mainstreaming – inclusion of HIV/AIDS issues in policies, plans and action in government responses beyond the health and HIV/AIDS sectors; enhancement of the roles of non-governmental partners in multi-sectoral responses; and emergence of workplace programmes in UNDP country offices and in public and private sector entities. However, despite the initiatives of UNDP and its partners, mainstreaming was found still to be at an early stage in most case-study countries, especially in key areas such as poverty reduction strategies.

38. The evaluation team was particularly concerned to find very limited mainstreaming into other UNDP programmes and activities. This finding suggests limited ownership of the HIV/AIDS agenda among UNDP country office staff beyond those immediately responsible for HIV/AIDS response.

39. HIV/AIDS deepens poverty and increases inequalities at every level. It is critical to integrate HIV/AIDS priorities into poverty reduction strategies to help create an enabling policy and resource environment. UNDP was found to be influential in achieving integration of HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategy documents in several countries, working closely with governments and national partners.

40. Substantial impact seemed unlikely on the basis of UNDP mainstreaming contributions. Very little attention was paid to gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, even at the government policy level. Where this was done, as in Botswana, follow-through was limited. The contributions sometimes seemed to be largely a matter of inserting appropriate material into policy documents, with little follow-up implementation. While this gap is not unique to UNDP, there is a long way to go to achieve full integration of HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategies, papers, processes, and outcomes.

41. Though UNDP leadership has triggered some important changes through the United Nations 'We Care' workplace programme in some countries, in others UNDP was seen more as a participant than a leader. There were missed opportunities for UNDP country offices and other United Nations partners to learn from and motivate each other to become model players in this regard. Country offices did not integrate this activity systematically into their own activities and programmes.

Capacity development

42. Capacity development has always been and remains a top priority for UNDP in supporting programme countries. While results differed among countries, the evaluation found that both institutional and individual capacity at all levels, from national and decentralized to the community level, had been strengthened by UNDP.

43. UNDP has contributed to enhanced capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS in the following areas: individual and institutional capacity in national HIV/AIDS commissions and ministerial departments; capacity for decentralized planning, management and implementation; capacity of HIV/AIDS-related CSOs and community level capacity; empowerment of people living with HIV/AIDS and others vulnerable to effects of the epidemic; and knowledge relating to HIV/AIDS to guide responses. In some countries UNDP appears to have missed opportunities to deal with larger-scale capacity problems in public sector management, particularly related to human resource planning, development and management.

44. Notable UNDP achievements have occurred at the community level and at decentralized levels of government, where limited ability to promote activity is often a major gap in national response. However, results related to gender and HIV/AIDS and the development of the capacity and involvement of women have not featured prominently in many countries.

45. Serious constraints so far on outcomes of capacity building exercises with CSOs and other players are (a) inadequate consideration of sustainability plans; (b) exit strategy; and (c) how to achieve the required scale of impact.

46. An increasingly prominent area of capacity development is building country capacity to mobilize and manage external HIV/AIDS resources. UNDP has begun to grapple with this issue, particularly through its Global Fund principal recipient role. It was found that insufficient emphasis had been given to moving such resources beyond the national level to decentralized and community levels. UNDP assumed a major HIV/AIDS capacity development role through its principal recipient responsibility for GFATM resources in two of the case-study countries, where it is likely that without UNDP support no access to GFATM would have been possible. However, while the importance of UNDP's potential capacity development contributions as Global Fund PR was underscored, UNDP's assumption of this role raised concerns in the mind of some stakeholders as to whether it created a conflict

of interest with other UNDP activities, and particularly with its role of neutral, disinterested advisor to the public authorities.

47. The evaluation found that approaches to UNDP HIV/AIDS capacity development innovations were sometimes weak in strategic focus, leading to limited sustainability and impact. Issues of scale and sustainability were raised with respect to 'community conversations' in several countries. The role of United Nations Volunteers, which had been successful in achieving urgent outcomes, was cited as needing to be more strategic. UNDP training in several countries was noted as lacking coherent planning and follow-up. These issues were thought appropriate for action by the UNDP Southern African Capacity Initiative (SACI).

48. The scale and range of HIV/AIDS capacity challenges in the case-study countries remains huge. It was thought that UNDP risked spreading itself too thin as a result of limited prioritization, limited consolidation of capacity development agendas, and limited reinforcement and exchange of experience among countries. Stakeholders found a possible role for the UNDP Regional Centre for Southern Africa in cross-country experience sharing.

HIV/AIDS partnership coordination

49. In nearly all the case-study countries, UNDP has played an important role in partnership coordination for the achievement of country results. This was most evident in *financial resource mobilization* from the Global Fund in Angola and Zimbabwe. UNDP assisted some countries in obtaining increasing government financial allocations to HIV/AIDS, but the amounts were dwarfed by the larger funding from external partners such as GFATM and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (United States of America).

50. UNDP made important contributions in some of the case-study countries in strengthening *interagency synergy* among United Nations organizations and with official development partners, as exemplified by the effective functioning of HIV/AIDS theme groups. Obstacles to effective partnerships included inadequate communication; inadequate agency role definition and resulting tensions; limited UNDP assertiveness; and excessively project-focused approaches. Differences among UNDP headquarters staff in their personal commitment to the corporate HIV/AIDS agenda were also cited as part of the explanation for inter-country differences in the HIV/AIDS response of UNDP.

51. The HIV/AIDS practice of UNDP is a part of a larger joint United Nations programme – UNAIDS – of which UNDP is one of ten co-sponsors. At the country level they form the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. For UNDP, the most significant institutional change over the period of this evaluation has been the striking growth of the UNAIDS secretariat and the expansion of its action and presence in the field. In many countries, the UNAIDS secretariat has recruited Country Coordinators, while UNDP has only part time HIV/AIDS focal points. Tensions were found to have undermined synergies between the two in some countries.

52. The evaluation found that many stakeholders would like UNDP to provide more leadership in partnership coordination for country results in the HIV/AIDS response. Strategies to strengthen partnership development roles were thought to require the consideration of several factors including: specific circumstances and opportunities in each country; capacity of country offices and the skills and attitudes

of specific resident representatives, resident coordinators and staff; clarification of roles between UNAIDS and UNDP at the country level; and improved design and communication of the UNDP country office HIV/AIDS strategy.

53. The positive partnership coordination outcomes documented in the evaluation were widely thought to have been accomplished with less-than-adequate country office and regional centre staff and coordination – a view shared among country office staff and many development partners. The newly established regional centre was seen by many as an important complement to the country office, but its role, activities, and coordination with country office initiatives were not well understood. Observers wondered whether country office capacity might be strengthened by 'projectizing' support and thereby removing it from the constraints of the UNDP country office administrative budget. From 2003 to 2004, the last year of the review period, the available data indicate that the share of HIV/AIDS in UNDP spending increased in only four of the ten case-study countries, and actually declined in six.

B. Strategy and management of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response

54. UNDP has made significant efforts to mobilize resources for its interventions in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It operates at three levels – corporate, regional and national. Resources are mobilized through different funding sources – the global thematic trust fund set up in 2002 to support GCF resources; projects at the regional level; and core and non-core resources at the country level.

Strategic focus

55. The evaluation found a disconnect between the UNDP corporate strategy for HIV/AIDS and implementation or action by country offices, and little evidence of integration of corporate, regional and country-level strategies and activities. A further disconnect existed between the country cooperation framework (CCF) and actual activities. Broad frameworks had not necessarily been consistent or adequately captured what UNDP actually planned and executed at the country level.

56. Such disconnections between CCFs and programme statements, compared to actual activities, might indicate adaptation, evolution, and flexibility in the UNDP response; or, alternatively, might indicate possible disjunctions among the paradigms and strategies of UNDP country offices, headquarters, and the regional centre. Headquarters initiatives did not seem to be reliably consistent with country-level circumstances and capacity.

Funding by UNDP

57. In the countries reviewed, the evaluation found that the role of UNDP in HIV/AIDS had substantially increased in the period covered by this evaluation, with many new activities being funded. Nonetheless, in some countries HIV/AIDS still was not a central element in country programmes. A review of CCFs showed that discussions of HIV/AIDS were vague and somewhat limited.

58. UNDP spending on HIV/AIDS has substantially increased in overall terms. Although financial information was not available to assess patterns and trends with a high degree of confidence, the evaluation found significant differences among the case-study countries in the amounts and shares of HIV/AIDS spending in total country programme spending. The low levels and small shares of HIV/AIDS in UNDP country programme spending in some countries as late as 2004 (6-9 per cent in three countries) did not seem to reflect the UNDP corporate priority and strategy

on HIV/AIDS at the country level. The very high share in other countries (as high as 62 per cent in one country) suggests that determined leadership by the UNDP Resident Representative or the United Nations Resident Coordinator can make a very significant difference.

Country office HIV/AIDS capacity

59. Wide variations exist in the technical and organizational capacity of the country offices to support national HIV/AIDS responses, as well as the determination of country office managers and staff to take action. The difficulty in obtaining coherent, consistent financial and other data on UNDP HIV/AIDS projects and programmes from headquarters databases and from the country offices themselves raises questions about the capacity of UNDP to be accountable and manage resources in an effective and timely manner.

Promise and performance

60. Despite the achievements of UNDP in making HIV/AIDS a development issue, the evaluation found serious gaps between promises made by UNDP and its performance. The soaring rhetoric of senior management statements and UNDP publications on HIV/AIDS was inadequately matched by comparable country office performance in the design and execution of UNDP activities. Overall, the evaluation perceived large 'delivery gaps' in translating policies into actions that would mitigate and eventually reduce the incidence and impact of the pandemic to a significant degree.

61. Focus on implementation was given inadequate attention at two levels. UNDP projects and programmes were thought to require greater support from country offices to reduce delays in execution; and as growing external financial resources were being promised by donors for the HIV/AIDS response, UNDP was found not yet to be providing the new types of support needed for execution of country HIV/AIDS programmes in the public and private sectors, including the NGO community.

C. Monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response

Availability of data

62. The limited quantity of available monitoring and evaluation data related to inputs, processes, outputs and results imposed serious constraints on the evaluation and raised questions regarding the sustainability of the UNDP HIV/AIDS response. Weaknesses were observed in the lack of outcome-oriented evaluation at the country office level (with one or two exceptions), and quantified or other clearly documented evidence was scarce. The concept of outcome evaluation was not yet firmly anchored in UNDP – to the extent that country office understanding of an independent evaluation, and the level of support it received, varied greatly from country to country.

Evaluation and exit strategies

63. The evaluation found that UNDP HIV/AIDS projects – which frequently took the form of pilot operations – generally lacked evaluation and exit strategies, and seemed simply to come to a halt. In Ethiopia, UNDP was found to be making successful efforts in this respect with its 'community conversations' programme.

Such actions are critical if UNDP interventions are to be sustainable in the long term.

Sustainability

64. The evaluation found that without carefully planned and executed evaluation and exit strategies, the chances of sustaining UNDP projects and activities well beyond the period of UNDP financial support were low.

IV. Recommendations

65. **This evaluation has one overarching recommendation:** In Southern Africa – the sub-region where HIV/AIDS is the most severe in the entire world – the country offices in the case-study countries must demonstrate a much higher level of urgency in their work on HIV/AIDS.

66. Urgency should be measured, inter alia, by use of resources, leadership, people, time and money. Total UNDP spending on HIV/AIDS overall is not large enough to have a significant impact on the epidemic at the country level. It is therefore particularly important that it use HIV/AIDS resources, both human and financial, in a strategic manner. It is critical to develop coherent approaches to leveraging partner resources in order to achieve the scale of outcomes required in countries with very severe epidemics.

67. With support of an agile team drawn from all concerned headquarters units and the Regional Centre, each UNDP country office and each of the other units concerned should develop, by September 2006, a monitorable action plan through which to implement the specific recommendations detailed in the evaluation report.

68. The specific recommendations of the evaluation are:

To country offices:

(a) *Clarify strategic direction.* Country offices should *formulate or update UNDP country HIV/AIDS strategies* and *integrate them into national HIV/AIDS strategies and programmes*. Strategies should (i) include UNDP inputs from the Regional Centre and headquarters units, and promote mainstreaming, especially the full integration of HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategies; (ii) draw upon initiatives from the headquarters Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Regional Centre, where those initiatives are relevant to the country's situation; (iii) be based on country demand and need rather than UNDP supply, take into account implementation of the 'Three Ones' principles, and support donor harmonization, and support for integration of HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategies, and implementation of associated actions should feature prominently in UNDP country HIV/AIDS strategies and programmes; and (iv) integrate all UNDP financial resources for HIV/AIDS, whether managed at country, regional or headquarters level, whether core resources or trust funds.

(b) *Shift programme focus.* (i) Give central attention to supporting implementation of country HIV/AIDS programmes, especially at decentralized levels. (ii) With support from the Regional Centre, assist partner countries in designing, financing, and executing programmes that take actions successfully piloted by UNDP and other external partners to scale on a country-wide basis. (iii) Assist partner countries with mobilization, disbursement and effective utilization of external financial resources for HIV/AIDS, with support from the Regional Centre.

(c) *Strengthen HIV/AIDS capacity.* Country offices should strengthen their HIV/AIDS capacity, with support from the Regional Centre for Southern Africa and headquarters. Country office HIV/AIDS capacity should be understood to include budgets; staff skills, attitudes, and deployment; staff incentives; organization for HIV/AIDS work; and internal and external leadership. Leadership by example rather than by mandate should characterize UNDP cooperation with United Nations organizations and other partners. In their HIV/AIDS work, country offices should go beyond UNDP projects and should plan, draw upon and facilitate deployment of the entirety of the institutional resources available to UNDP through UNAIDS and the United Nations system.

(d) *Foster a culture of monitoring and evaluation.* Such a culture should be fostered by strengthening monitoring, evaluation, exit strategies, and especially learning from experience, with an expectation of measurable results from each UNDP HIV/AIDS project or intervention. Specific recommendations: (i) review each ongoing UNDP HIV/AIDS project or activity for adequacy of its monitoring, evaluation and exit strategy. Projects should not simply end, but should have a planned exit strategy involving evaluation and transfer of responsibility for subsequent stages of successful activity to the host Government or other partners. (ii) Establish successful work on monitoring and evaluation as a criterion for positive evaluation of staff performance. (iii) Draw upon the monitoring and evaluation work of the regional centre for methodology, to synthesise monitoring and evaluation analysis in forms usable by others, and to establish and disseminate good practices and lessons learned.

69. *To the Regional Bureau for Africa:*

Assume new HIV/AIDS leadership roles.

(a) Support stronger HIV/AIDS leadership on the part of resident coordinators and resident representatives. The Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) should support and promote increasingly proactive leadership on HIV/AIDS, through job design, staff selection and performance appraisal, and through support with other UNDP units and external partners.

(b) Review and, where necessary, revise SACI strategies and mandates, and especially the Armada projects, in close cooperation with the regional centre, to prioritize supporting country HIV/AIDS programmes with particular reference to monitoring and evaluation, and disseminating good practices; supporting expansion of pilots evaluated as successful, and – more generally – to design and support public management actions necessary for scaled-up HIV/AIDS programmes; and contributing formulating and executing country office HIV/AIDS strategies and programmes.

(c) Lead a task force for the independent assessment of HIV/AIDS capacity in country offices, the regional centre, and RBA with the participation of RBA, BDP, the Bureau of Management (BOM), the Regional Centre, and country offices.

70. *To the Bureau for Development Policy:*

Review corporate HIV/AIDS strategy. Review the corporate HIV/AIDS strategy of UNDP in the light of the evaluation report, to support implementation of country HIV/AIDS programmes and poverty reduction strategies.

(a) Focus on the two themes of: (i) support to implementation of country HIV/AIDS projects and programmes, and (ii) support to integration of HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategies. UNDP/BDP HIV/AIDS programmes outside the

two central themes should gradually be consolidated and transferred to other partners, except to the extent that they are directly responsive to country demand and have been evaluated as being successful. The revised corporate strategy should encompass a review of UNDP approaches to mainstreaming.

(b) Assist the regional centre, and especially country offices, with HIV/AIDS country strategy formulation and implementation.

(c) Weigh the HIV/AIDS capacity of BDP, including budgets, staff skills, attitudes, and incentives, and links with other UNDP units and partners, against the changing needs. BDP should give particular attention to capacity for monitoring and evaluation.

71. *To the Bureau of Management:*

Accelerate implementation of financial management improvement programme. The financial management strengthening programme should make it possible for users in BDP, regional bureaux and country offices to access and effectively use real-time, consistent, comparable financial data on the full range of UNDP HIV/AIDS activities.

72. *To the Office of the Associate Administrator:*

Clarify working relationships. Examine and, where necessary, refine and revise internal HIV/AIDS working and reporting relationships and external partnerships. The Office of the Associate Administrator should position UNDP for increasingly effective engagement on HIV/AIDS.

(a) Take the lead in defining standards and procedures for use by country offices in resolving problems that arise in implementing the division of HIV/AIDS-related labour among United Nations organizations recently agreed in follow-up to the work of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination. Particular attention is needed in this connection to ensure effective cooperation between UNDP and the UNAIDS secretariat.

(b) Review collaboration and reporting relationships among the concerned headquarters offices and bureaux, the regional centre and the country offices. The principle should be established that the country offices are supported by the other units within the framework of agreed strategies.

(c) Review for conflict of interest the role of UNDP as principal recipient for the Global Fund. If that role is retained, guidelines and procedures should be established to ensure its separation from UNDP advisory functions, and there should be a concentrated focus on capacity development for early phase-out at the country level.

73. *To the Executive Board:*

Request a report on the implementation of the recommendations for the annual session, 2007. The Executive Board should monitor implementation of the recommendations and should commission a further evaluation at a convenient mid-point between 2006 and 2015.